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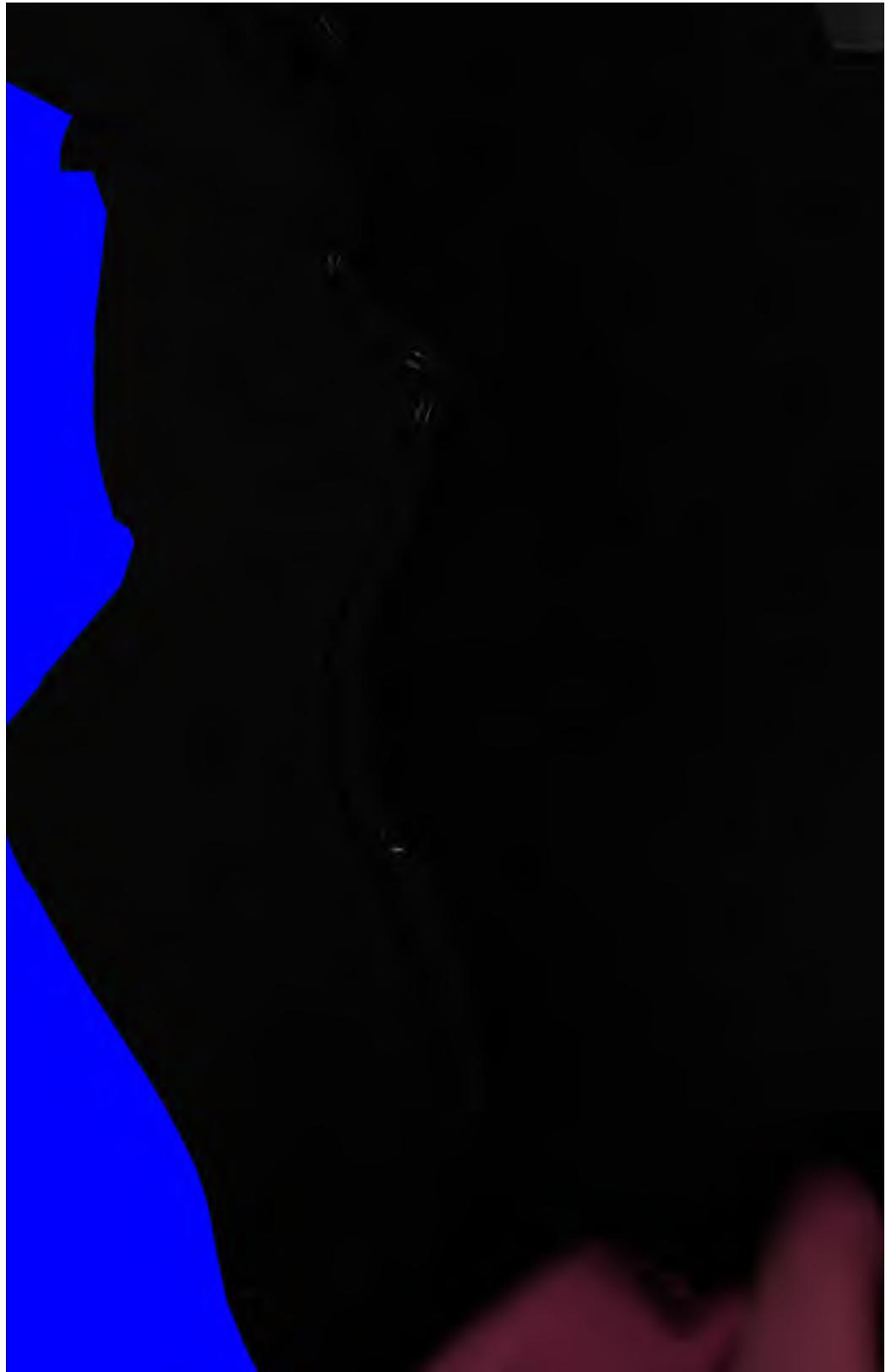
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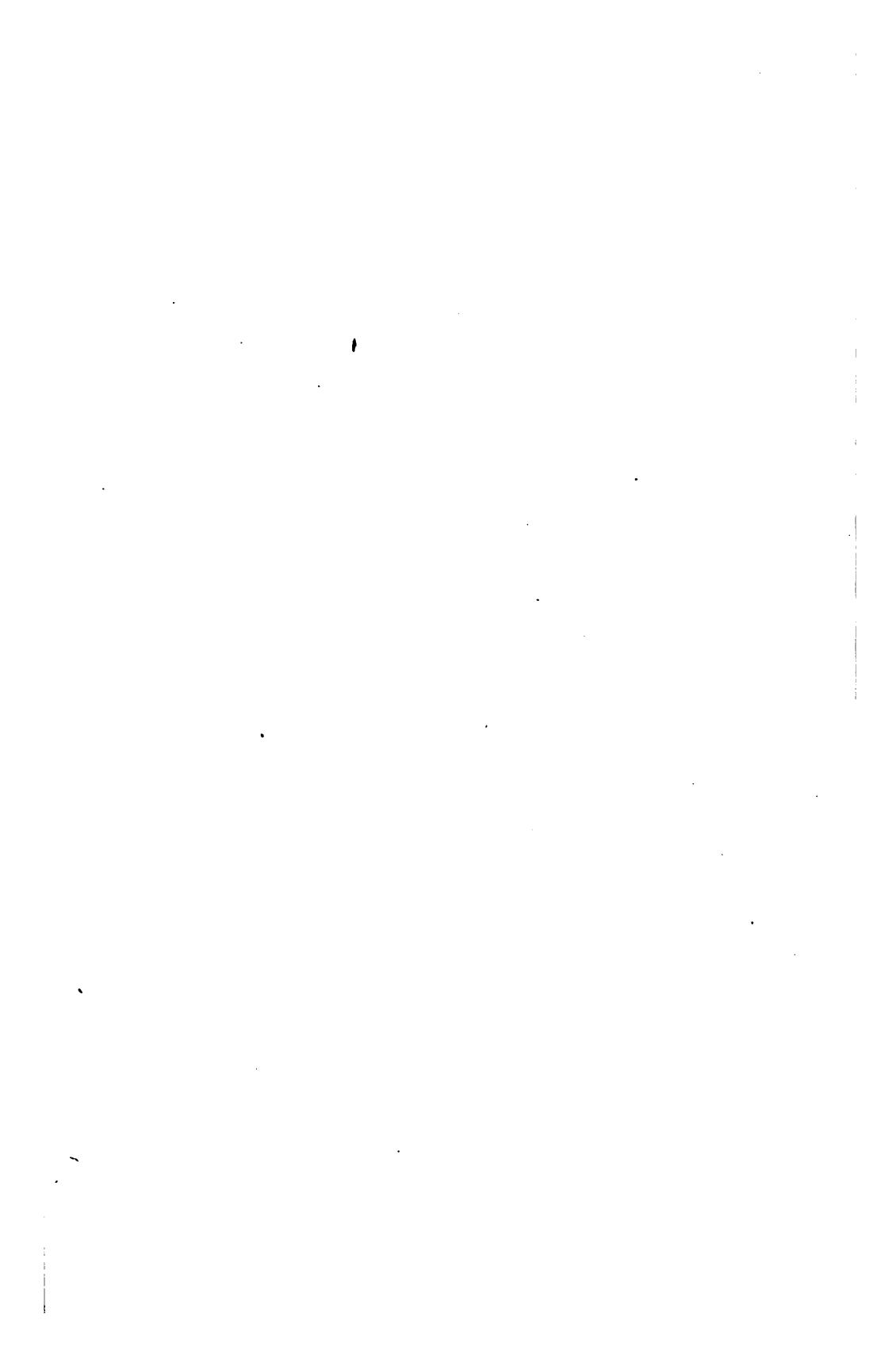
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PLAYS AND POEMS

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# **PLAYS AND POEMS.**







John Bartholomew  
Keith Reid

# POEMS.

BY  
J. H. WHITING,  
NEW YORK & C.  
1850.

APJ8051



# PLAYS AND POEMS.

BY

T. LEITH RETTIE,  
ABERDEEN,

*Author of "Shadows on the Hearth," &c.*

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Aberdeen:  
JOHN AVERY & CO.

1884

APJ8051

ABERDEEN:  
JOHN AVERY & CO.,  
PRINTERS.

**This web of humble hue  
The loom of leisure wove  
With weft from the dutiful,  
The false, and the beautiful,  
And gold warp from the true  
In life and love !**



## **STRATAGEMS AND SPOILS.**

# Stratagems and Spoils:

## A Comedy in Five Acts.

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### PERSONS IN THE PLAY.

MR. HARDACRE,	. . . . .	A Retired Merchant.
SIR FLIMSEY FLINTS,	. . .	Suitor to Florence.
LIEUTENANT FLINTS,	. . .	His Son.
LIEUTENANT HARDY,	. . .	In love with Florence.
MR. TWICKS,	. . . . .	A Lawyer.
MAJOR MAXILBY,	. . . . .	Friend to Hardacre.
CAPTAIN MAXILBY,	. . . . .	His Son.
LURKS,	{ . . . . .	Servants to Hardacre.
MILLY,	{ . . . . .	
HELENE,	. . . . .	Niece to Maxilby.
MABEL,	{ . . . . .	Daughters of Hardacre.
FLORENCE,	{ . . . . .	
MRS. HARDACRE,	. . . . .	—

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SCENE—Chiefly at Mr. Hardacre's suburban villa.

TIME—The present.  
Three months elapse between Third and Fourth Acts.

# STRATEGEMS AND SPOILS.

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## ACT I.

*SCENE I.—AN APARTMENT IN BARRACKS.*

*(Captain Maxilby and Lieutenant Flints discovered.)*

*Max.*—I say, Flints, let 's have a game at chess.

*Flints*—Not now, Max, I 'm quite exhausted by the heat and the drill ; besides you 'll beat me.

*Max.*—Well, honourable defeat is better than dishonourable victory, all the world over—one game ?

*Flints*—No, Max, I 'll not play at present; I 'm so fatigued that I absolutely refuse to speak—refuse to play—refuse to move. (*Doses.*)

*Max.*—Well, well, Flints, that 's unequivocal ; but let 's see how things are shaping in the East—grave complications. Ahem! England as a mediator, the Soudan in revolt—why, the rogue 's asleep! I say, Flints, did you hear me at the war news ?

*Flints*—Yes, I faintly heard you ; the reading of that sensational type has always a drugging effect on me : but what the deuce has come of Hardy all these hours ?

*Max.*—A useless query when a man 's in love.

*Flints*—Hardy in love? Nonsense! Max, he 's mad.

*Max.*—Well, there 's only a thin partition between a lover and a madman—one has a frenzy of the brain, and the other has a frenzy of the blood.

*Flints*—Then, do you know the chicken he 's soft on ?

*Max.*—No, I do not; but his actions give me a faint index to her name. Why, he wastes more good breath in repeating "Florence" than would revivify a dead man. Ha ! ha !

*Flints*—That 's a rather jolly laugh you are taking, Max : I 'll join you—ha ! ha !

*Max.*—Certainly, Flints ; but you would n't be a hearty partner in the laugh if you only knew the cause.

*Flints*—I 'm eager to know ; some old remembrance, eh ?

*Max.*—Yes, you 're right—thoroughly prophetic : I was just remembering the jolly laugh I had over your little love peccadillo, when you grew soft on my cousin Helen. Why, Flints, I declare that love must be the most sensitive passion under the moon. To think, my dear fellow, that I could melt the fervour of your immortal vows by a slight allusion to the abnormal structure of your lady's ankle. Ha ! ha !

*Flints*—Don 't pinch too hard, Max, and poke up these dead remembrances.

*Max.*—Why not, Flints ? Isn 't it better to turn over the dead ashes of your affection, and see if there is no smouldering flame, eh ?

*Flints*—Well, well, so be it ; but you will find me no traitor to your principles, and, as a proof of my loyalty, let us drink to their continued vigour.

*Max.*—I 'll join you heartily.

*Flints*—Propose the oath, and I 'll pledge my allegiance.

*Max.*—We swear never to be captured, captivated, or charmed by the fascinations and intrigues of women. So help us Mercy! Why, Flints, our oath has partaken of quite a tragic character, light as we may look at it.  
*(They drink).*

*Flints*—Is it possible we are only masquerading?

*Max.*—Bother you, Flints, I'm afraid you 'll collapse. I never turn my talk on the soft side but you are away among conjectures and philosophy. Now, here is Hardy—poor devil!—leaving his wine and friends for the sharp bitings and the perjuries of a woman's tongue. Now, rather than be such a fool, I'd change my mortality with a mummy. Now, Flints, think on the figure a fellow cuts when he barteres his manly virtues for the fugitive charms of a human hen! No softness, Flints, eh?

*Flints*—No parley with my enemy, but while we are talking don't let us forget that invite to old Hardacre's, good old fellow; it 's to-night.

*Max.*—Yes, I shall remember; but take good care Flints, you will find a perfect brood of butterflies there; but here comes Hardy gloomy as a hermit.

*Enter Hardy.*

*Flints*—I declare he 's quite oblivious.

*Max.*—Ah! I see he has been writing to this heroine of his sighs. I say, Hardy, we missed you at our game.

*Hardy*—I pray you pardon me, a private matter has occupied my undivided attention.

*Max.*—That must be true! but you do seem in the mumps to-day. Have you been drinking, gambling, or——?

*Hardy*—I have no humour for your merriment.

*Max. (aside)*—Still feasting, Flints, upon her apparition.

Hardy, it is rumoured in camp that you are affected with an interesting emotion called love. If it's true, may we ask how the malady progresses?

*Flints*—I would suggest a cure, Hardy. A little neglect and a little wholesome contempt, well mixed, given night and morning, is a splendid physic for a coquettish shrew.

*Max. (aside)*—Don't prescribe a physic so impotent on yourself, Flints.

*Hardy*—I have no words to meet your ribaldry, but my sword will answer any of you. (*Draws.*)

*Max.*—Come, come, Hardy.

*Hardy*—You make a target of me.

*Max.*—Well, not a target exactly; but you do seem *outre* in your present state of feeling. But what the deuce troubles you? You need not grind yourself away because your uncle was barbarous enough to cut you off with only your commission.

*Hardy*—If you think I murmur at my altered prospects you are mistaken.

*Max.*—Well, it was rather hard of the old squire to cut you off as he did, but for the moment we will leave you. Come, Flints, he wants to be alone. Take my advice, Hardy, and write nothing in a hurry; use the fading ink. Hasty words cost a deal, when there is no chance of getting them erased. As thus:—So and So against So and So: verdict for the fair plaintiff: damages three years' full pay. Ha! ha!

*Flints*—Divine Florence! [Exeunt.

*Hardy*—They gnaw my heart, because they conjecture I love. I love with all the fervour of my soul! I would my messenger were here.

*Enter Lurks.*

Ah, my trusty Lurks! thank you.

(Gives a letter.)

Here's a trifle for you.

*Lurks*—Them army chaps are a gingerly set—threepence for a love letter! Why, he'd pay more for a letter writer, getting all shades of affection, 'tis true, but for a real scented one only three—I'll invest it in Government bonds, beer and tobacco. [Exit.

*Hardy* (reads letter)—My star still shines. "You may adventure at the hour you name, but signal 'neath the balcony." I will adventure! Shine out fair moon! "You may venture, you may"— [Exit.

(Re-enter Maxilby and Flints.)

*Max.*—Lucky dog that I am to get this letter just before we go to Hardacre's. Nothing like a fine edge of good humour for these routs.

*Flints*—Wish I could guarantee my correspondence as you can. I expect mine will be the very reverse of yours.

*Max.*—Well, suppose we swap—heads or tails for a mutual surrender.

*Flints*—Mine I expect is worthless!—only a stern refusal to advance more money.

*Max.*—Well, if mine is not exactly the opposite, it's not worth the postage. Shall we swap?

*Flints*—'Tis useless, Max. I know the purport of mine.

*Max.*—As you please; but listen—"My dear boy, I hasten to acquaint you of good news."

*Flints (reading)*—"That I incline to wed again."

*Max.*—"Be not surprised, you are in handsome luck, Hicks Hardy's uncle has not forgotten you. You share a considerable part of his property." By Jove, I am again upon the top of Fortune's wheel.

*Flints (reading)*—"The lady of my choice is quite familiar to you."

*Max.*—"I shall see you at Hardacre's, when I shall be more explicit on the matter."

Well, Flints, what's the extreme value of your good news?

*Flints*—Why, what do you think, Max.? my old dad intends to wed again!

*Max.*—The old fossil! pardon me; but you see he is quite an artist at the game. How many mothers have you got now, Flints?

*Flints*—I've stopped reckoning long ago.

*Max.*—I suppose they come step by step now; but you see the game is not yet played out; and Nature is not extinguished at sixty. My news is pretty?

*Flints*—I'm puzzled how to act.

*Max.*—Don't act at all—that's the best act you can do—leave everything to your guardian angels; but I suppose you will be curious to know who your intended mother is to be?

*Flints*—Well, it would certainly sharpen another's curiosity.

*Max.*—Really, I suppose so ; but as I am curious to know more about this bit of luck I 'm in for, let 's prepare for Hardacre's. The old fellow will be in his funniest mood ; and when once you do get over his trapeze of a tongue, which sometimes will swing him to the stupid side, you will find him the best old fellow going. He 's a magistrate, and may bluster a bit about the bench possibly ; but a little of the soothing syrup soon brings him about. Take a note, Flints, his family and ours claim some remote kinship I believe.

*Flints*—I 'll humour the old cock.

*Max.*—My old dad will be, as usual, cursing the climate, and trying to think he is ill, and yours will be sparkling, with the aid of Rimmel, like a gay old Adonis. Bye the bye, Flints, I 've been told that Hardacre's is a place for stratagems among the match-making mammas. After last affair, I was pestered in camp with newspapers and the deftest things possible in the way of a scratch, but no use ; so beware, I say—goods in the dull season go cheaply in the matrimonial market.

*Flints*—I 'm quite invincible.

*Max.* Well, to our principles previously avowed, and we will remember to defend our *fortes*. Thus, we pledge our faiths and disloyalty to women !

(*They drink, and exeunt.*)

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*SCENE II.—HARDACRE'S MANSION.*

*Enter Florence and Mr. Hardacre.*

*Mr. Hard.*—I say, Flo., you might just give us a tripping air to raise my spirits an octave. The garden is illuminated, and the scene is very fine.

*Flo.*—The blackbird has begun its song in the copse. Listen how sweet and mellow !

*Mr. Hard.*—Is that the bird that sings nightly on the same tree ?

*Flo.*—No, that's the nightingale : but listen ! it is surely touching the chords of love between its mate.

*Mr. Hard.*—It is fortunate for our party. Where do you think it perches, Flo. ?

*Flo.*—I think it is among the poplars.

*Mr. Hard.*—Eight o'clock ! I 'll just go round the garden again, and see that everything is in trim for the guests to arrive. Flo., I have some very pretty news for you : something that will please you.

*Flo.*—You are the best of fathers ; but tell me now.

*Mr. Hard.*—No hurry, Flo. ; later in the evening it may suggest itself, which will be more natural. The sound of wheels ! I warrant a guest. [Exit.]

*Flo.*—What can he mean ? But let me solve this love-riddle first.

“ When lips are mute the pen can plant  
The white rose of the heart.”

Sweet words ! Can I believe you ? Can I believe the sweet interpretation my heart would put upon you ?

If you enshrine the love I long for, I thank you, blessed drops ; but if you do not, forgive my fondness. The hour approaches on mercurial wings. That should be the signal, counterfeiting the blackbird's song. Oh love, inspire me ! He must be in the garden, 'twixt a hope and fear—the gentle thief that comes to steal my heart. I have been thoughtless, and now can neither go forward nor retreat. Oh, he comes !

*Enter Hardy.*

*Hardy*—Lady, I have adventured at the promised hour.

*Flo*.—Is 't not a risk to enter in this way ? My friends may take you for a burglar if you are seen.

*Hardy*—I will bear all the penalties, if you but smile upon the enterprise.

*Flo*.—There 's some peril in 't. But true heroes find a relish in peril.

*Hardy*—Then I 'm no hero, for I do not relish the peril, but I love the prize.

*Flo*.—A prize is richer by the pains it costs. I pray you tell me what brought you here ?

*Hardy*—I thought really that our interview was mutually interpreted.

*Flo*.—My memory fails a little. Is not a meeting strange between strangers without a purpose ?

*Hardy*—Forgive me, lady ! I have surely enough fallen into folly. It is your duty to reproach me.

*Flo*.—The censure from ourselves is often severe enough, without a word from others. I pray you tell me what your motives are ?

*Hardy*—I had one motive, but, indeed, it is thawed away.  
My hopes have only miscarried, that is all ; and if you  
forgive me, I say good night. [Going.

*Flo.*—Nay ; will you be gone so hastily ?

*Hardy*—I must confess that haste has been too willing a  
spur ; so it must serve again.

*Flo.*—Nay, stay ! I think you have some purpose. Your  
modesty will not allow it to be spoken. I pray you to  
be free. Are you selling some rare embroidery ? I  
use such.

*Hardy*—I cannot hawk my heart, and so forgive me, and  
farewell.

*Flo.*—Nay, stay a moment ! What have you to sell ?

*Hardy*—To be plain : that which now has left my breast  
—my heart.

*Flo.*—Is it green and tender ? I fear you have mistaken  
your market. Besides, we grow such vegetables our-  
selves : there is a specimen of its vegetation—“ When  
lips are mute the pen can plant the white rose of the  
heart.”

“ The white rose of the heart.”

Do you recognise this love shoot ?

*Hardy*—Borne on your silver tongue, it seems unknown  
to me.

*Flo.*—I pray you to explain your lines. We are dead  
matter-of-fact here.

“ The white rose of the heart ” ?

*Hardy*—The heart sometimes will take refuge in obscurity.

*Flo.*—But now bring out the kernel of the matter. You  
have a heart ?

*Hardy*—A fond and foolish one, I think.

*Flo.*—The better 'tis; the sooner it will sell. 'Tis plain you want a bid?

*Hardy*—Can I believe you are in jest? Beneath your words I——; but no. If you speak fairly, I swear I'll give it you for nought.

*Flo.*—And I swear that I'll not have it on the terms.

*Hardy*—Then name the terms?

*Flo.*—You put no value on 't. Ask something in exchange. I pray you, whet your wits.

*Hardy*—I'll give my heart in fair exchange for yours.

*Flo.*—And I attest the bargain by the moon. The moon will save a deal of perjury.

*Hardy*—Oh, blessedness! Can I forgive my ears for cheating me so long?

*Flo.*—The playful chat is over. I ask no bond of faith, our hearts have spoke—another time! Our wooing may be romantic—possibly too like a day in spring. But my heart is in my mouth, and I cannot say more than—trust me!

*Hardy*—And you'll trust me?

*Flo.*—Hours will be years till we meet again.

*Hardy*—I will abridge all joys and be with you! One kiss!

*Flo.*—I hear a noise; dear heart, away. I had forgot the peril.

*Enter Hardacre.*

*Hard.*—Now, Flo., everything is ready, and the guests are just arriving. Sir! you are welcome. Florence, who is this gentleman?

*Flo.*—He is Captain Maxilby's friend ; one of the guests, just arrived on urgent business.

*Hardy*—Oh, for the Captain ?

*Flo.*—No, not for the Captain, but on his own account.

*Hard.* (*aside*)—A suspicious look about this business. I'll keep my eye on them. Really, sir, I am at a loss to understand the meaning of your visit, but you are welcome—any friends of friends are so to-night. But what's this? (*Lifting the note.*) “When lips are mute——” — baggage and poetry. Now I see your aims, sir. Deceitful girl! So this is the blackbird, is it? Begone, sir ; if you want to be my friend, come by an honourable road.

*Hardy*—Worthy, sir, this meeting is unfortunate ; but believe me, my motives are quite honourable. No need for further denial or disguise. I love your daughter, and she returns my love.

*Hard.*—Ay, ay, sir, this is a pretty confession, as if my daughter were a bit of old lumber for any fool to bid for. 'Tis my department to select your partner, and I have made appointment of your hand already. I'd rather give my daughter to my footman than any member of your bloodthirsty trade. Begone, sir, begone ; or I will make this outrage on my peace a public scandal.

*Enter Lurks (crying).*

How now, Lurks ? Why, what the devil are you blubbering for ?

*Lurks*—I—I—I don't know.

*Hard.*—Zounds! there's anarchy in my household. Peace, you blubbering fool; what is amiss?

*Lurks*—It's the Missus and I have split, and I am off to sea.

*Hard.*—I'll soon settle these squabbles. Come with me! Confusion, to seize upon me when I had reckoned on such a happy night. Come, you baby, and blubber in the kitchen. [Exit.]

*Hardy*—Sweet Florence! will you be true through all the shadows of fate?

*Flo.*—Oh, ask the dew if to the flower 'tis false. But trust me. I see the faint glimmer of a stratagem. Lurks has resigned: would you venture as a substitute for a little time, and possibly you may gain the favour of my self-willed father?

*Hardy*—An excellent device: let's see for means. 'Tis easy for me to gain a furlough, and begin the stratagem at once. Good night. To-morrow I'll be your father's footman. [Exit Hardy.]

*Flo.*—A sweet good night. How void my heart when he's gone!

*Enter Helene.*

*Helene*—A happy evening to my Cousin Florence.

*Flo.*—Cousin Helene, a thousand welcomes; how glad I am to see you. Do you come alone?

*Helene*—Almost as bad! I am the herald of Sir Flimsey Flints, a nice old beau, so lively and æsthetic—a regular old boy.

*Flo.*—I've heard of him.

*Helene*—I think he has been in league with some modern Mephistopheles, and bargained for a revival of his youth ; but the ungenerous sorcerer has given him childhood instead—second childhood—cousin. But hush, they come

*Enter Sir Flimsey Flints and Mrs. Hardacre.*

*Sir Flimsey*—'Tis so refreshing in that hazel copse.

*Mrs. Hard.*—Oh, Sir Flimsey, it is very commonplace. Nothing to your Swiss villa by Lucerne.

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to observe that you will have an early opportunity of beholding Swiss scenery. Oh, 'tis charming !

*Mrs. Hard.*—Oh, Sir Flimsey, you are so very kind. Bye the bye, do you think the time is appropriate for you for the celebration of your nuptials ?

*Sir Flimsey*—I may add, my dear Mrs. Hardacre, that the time is most appropriate for the happy event.

*Mrs. Hard.*—Of course I am not partial to the period ; but then you will be just in time to spend the autumn at your Swiss villa.

*Sir Flimsey*—True—true ; but of course all things will depend on the approval of Miss Florence.

*Mrs. Hard.*—Oh, Sir Flimsey, she'll not be tardy to approve of anything I suggest—I've schooled her into obedience ; and, what is more, she is actually dying of curiosity to see you.

*Flo. (aside)*—What do they mean, Helene ?

*Helene*—They mean mischief ; but listen.

*Mrs. Hard.*—But, in our talk, we have forgotten the other guests—and here, Sir Flimsey, is my daughter,

Florence, and her cousin, Helene. Oh, she is so studious, Sir Flimsey! Florence dear, this is Sir Flimsey Flints, a gentleman of renown.

*Flo.*—I am glad to see him! (*Aside*)—A painted pantaloons, cousin.

*Helene*—He is the model of a self-made man.

*Sir Flimsey*—A mutual joy I hope, Miss Hardacre; busy I perceive among your books?

*Mrs. Hard.* (*aside*)—Florence, this is great impropriety.

*Sir Flimsey*—May I venture to enquire what engrosses your attention so deeply?

*Flo.*—The pages of romance.

*Sir Flimsey*—The subject I venture to ask is?

*Flo.*—The spectacle of an old beau trying to look young in spite of years—one who has dyed hair, false teeth, and glass eyes; yet with all these modern adjuncts the moss of antiquity is still visible!

*Enter Lieutenant Flints and Captain Maxilby.*

(*Unobserved they seat themselves, and converse.*)

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah! I dare say—fools will be fools—but don't you think the picture is rather overdrawn?

*Flo.*—Oh, no! not a jot. I think it is so true, that the writer must have had a model to copy from, and living originals are not scarce.

*Max.* (*aside to Flints*)—A hard dig, Flints! He's in a fix.

*Flints*—Never mind, let them pull away.

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to add that I will have this pleasure on another occasion. I take my leave.

*Mrs. Hard.*—You will see Sir Flimsey very often Florence,

and I am sure you will be delighted with his genial society.

*Flo.*—I do not understand you quite ; I pray you explain.  
*Sir Flimsey*—To-morrow, Miss Hardacre, I hope to give my views full espousal.

*Max. (aside)*—I say, Flints, Miss Hardacre is to be your intended mother.

*Flints*—'Gad, Max., you have uttered my suspicion.

*Enter Hardacre.*

*Hard.*—Ah ! my dear Sir Flimsey, I am so glad to see you. Enjoyed the garden air ?

*Sir Flimsey*—Extremely so ; it is so refreshing ! Glad to see you, my dear sir. By the way, a few more Underminings ? Just a few. The company is floated now.

*Hard.*—Well, just a few. Ah, my gallants, how are you both ? Glad, glad to see you.

*Max.*—Speaking for both, we are heartily glad to renew our acquaintance. [Guests assemble.]

*Enter Major Maxilby and Mabel.*

*Hard.*—Ah ! my dear major, glad to see you. You have overcome your enemy, I see. How are you ?

*Major*—Ask a bundle of old bones, Hardacre. I am crucified with gout, and that atrocious easterly wind you are the heirs of hereabouts would need a constitution of cast-iron. Oh, 'tis more crucial to me than a foul retreat, or to suffer a repulse from cut-throat thieves.

*Hard.*—Well, pluck yourself together, and we will go in for a regular tiffen. (*Aside*)—I say, Major, there will be some sport with these gallants : look you.

(*Introductions pass between parties.*)

*Mabel (to Helene)*—Who is that gentleman in the military uniform, the star conspicuous on his breast?

*Helene*—That is Captain Maxilby. He is a Stoic and a relation; and yonder is his pupil, Lieutenant Flints.

*Mabel*—A Stoic? Oh! what a heartless name.

*Capt. Max. (aside)*—I say, Flints, what do you think of the matrimonial show, eh?

*Flints*—It's full of glitter, and a good dash of aping.

*Capt. Max.*—Just look at that embroidered chicken trying to pass her assurance off for wit, and her clumsiness for dignity! What's the matter, Flints?

*Flints*—Why, I'd rather have had two bullets shot at me than the glance of a pair of eyes this minute.

*Capt. Max.*—Oh, I see your old flame, Helene? Give her a haughty menace in return. Don't hang out the white flag of surrender. I say, Flints, take a peep at your intended mother. By Jove, if I were the baronet I would not trust you with such a dainty morsel. But here comes our host this way. He is going to be important, listen.

*Hard.*—Well, my friends, I bid you all welcome—heartily I do so; and though it's not business we should talk about at the present time, still, I may be allowed to say that my friend, Sir Flimsey, and myself have just been successful in launching the best Joint Stock Company floated for years.

*Capt. Max.*—We are right glad to hear it.

*Hard.*—It's not everything I go in for, and some years ago I was advised to go into a scheme which I considered quite Utopian.

*Capt. Max. (aside)*—The old fossil is on the swing. Wait till he settles.

*Hard.*—Well, this scheme, so Utopian to me, appeared a short while after under the Estremadura—

*Capt. Max. (aside)*—Estremadura! that's a nice mouthful.

Yes, I understand; just beside the Guadalquivir.

*Hard.*—Yes, of course, the Guadalquivir was in it.

*Capt. Max. (aside)*—'Gad if you're not muzzled, you'll make us all quiver.

*Flints (aside)*—Try and change the subject.

*Capt. Max.*—Yes, certainly, Mr. Hardacre; but I have forgotten to compliment you on your really unique grotto, and the fossils are immense. Gneiss!

*Hard.*—Well, they're all my own collecting; and when I was on the bench the other day—

*Capt. Max.*—Yes, of course; but suppose we appeal to the jury for the moment: so—ladies and gentlemen, are all agreed that an immediate acquaintance should be made with our host's really romantic grotto, where you will see some of the rarest fossils in the shire?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Oh, Sir Flimsey, with your romantic tastes it will be delightful.

*Sir Flimsey.*—I shall be greatly charmed. May I venture to offer you my arm?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Well, the moon is up, and it wouldn't be a bad idea; and those who are still nimble in the feet can trip to their hearts' content beneath the canopy.

*Capt. Max.*—Voted and carried. Let's be gallant, Flints.

(*Aside.*) I'll take Mabel. You can take your old flame, Helene.

*Flints (aside)*—The devil, Max.! She'll crucify me.

*Capt. Max. (to Mabel)*—May I devote the support of my arm?

*Flints (to Helene)*—May I profane with my unworthy hand?

*Helene*—Such devotion in a Stoic! Really you forget yourself. [Exeunt all but Florence and Hardacre.

*Hard.*—Florence! I have a word or two to say to you tonight. I'll wait until the guests retire. [Exit.

*Florence (alone)*—The dictate of my heart would crush my unbelief; but a wild conjecture seizes on me. Is this enfeebled paragon of age—this scattered relics of what once was man—appointed with my hand? I fear 'tis true. Money—money is the active devil; but I will not be sacrificed. I love but Hardy, my own Hardy.

*Re-enter Hardy.*

*Hardy*—If I could kiss that righteous tear away. Courage, gentle Florence, all may be well.

*Florence*—All will be ill if you remain here. Oh, linger not, for peril is supreme. The guests are only in the garden. Oh, begone!

*Hardy*—Would Florence have me gone or have me stay?

*Florence*—I know not what I say: to-morrow let us trust our stratagem will thrive.

*Hardy*—Trust in my soul's best efforts.

*Re-enter Capt. Maxilby, Sir Flimsey Flints, Lieutenant Flints, and Mr. Hardacre.*

*Capt. Max.*—I think I saw the burglar enter here. Oh, here he is; by all the saints, 'tis Hardy!

*Flints*—By all the powers, 'tis Hardy!

*Hardy*.—By all the fiends, I'll make him keep his roost!

Do you know, sir, I am a magistrate?

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to enquire who might the fellow be?

*Hardy*—The proud possessor of this lady's heart!

(*The lovers embrace, looking resolutely at the surprised group.*)

END OF ACT I.



**A C T II.****SCENE I.—HARDACRE'S GARDEN.**

*Enter Captain Maxilby and Lieutenant Flints by different ways (musing).*

*Flints*—Confound Maxilby and his atrocious principles !  
I 'll tell him flatly that I 'll give them up.

*Max.*—That delicious hour in the grotto with that bewitching creature, Mabel, would have thawed a misanthrope.

*Flints*—Confound Maxilby, I say, to have cheated me of such a charming girl ! [They meet.]

*Max.*—Eh ? Flints ! where did you spring from ?

*Flints*—Eh ? where did you ?

*Max.*—I don't know ; but it 's dangerous to think aloud.  
What were you saying, Flints ?

*Flints*—Nothing audible, I 'll be sworn !

*Max.*—Then you are foresworn, for I heard you.

*Flints*—Well, Max. ?

*Max.*—Well, Flints ! you 're turned traitor I can see.  
You are a nice pupil ! I knew it.

*Flints*—Confound your principles, I say. I 've been a fool to, outwardly, believe what I inwardly repudiated.

*Max.*—I expected as much. I knew all was on the surface with you. But are you really caught again ?

*Flints*—Don't rub too hard, Max. You may experience something akin yourself.

*Max.*—Oh, ho! well, that's good. Why, rather than surrender one item of my principles, I'd grow soft on a baboon! (*Aside*) I must not let Flints know that I have collapsed.

*Flints*—Well, don't tease me, Max., if you please. I didn't sleep a wink all last night.

*Max.*—Poor devil! Oh, love, love, what a tyrant you are! —cheating a man of his lawful and legitimate repose.

*Flints*—Nonsense, Max., you are quite fanciful.

*Max.*—Oh, no! not a bit. Hardy, poor devil, has smitten you. By the bye, was not that a rather romantic episode last night? Who would have thought he was the baronet's rival?

*Flints*—It did astonish me, but let them tussle away.

*Max.*—I suppose you have got quite enough with your own stock of troubles now, but I fear the baronet will get the worst of it, and you will be cheated of your intended mother.

*Flints*—Well, I care not. I suppose we will have to pack up and say goodbye to the good folks here.

*Max.*—Oh, No! I mean to chase away a week tidily here; but as for you, Flints, you won't do anything but flirt with that butterfly, Helene. By Jove, Flints, here she comes looking like—to be poetic, just like the peep of dawn on a half-blown rose! I'll join you in a cigar.

*Flints*—No, thank you; I can't smoke to-day. In fact, I have no humour for any society but my own.

*Max.*—I think, really, you are in the first stages of the chicken-pox of love. I'll have to re-vaccinate you with the *virus* of my principles.

*Flints*—Nonsense, Max., don't be stupid.

*Max.*—Is there anything I can do—anything you want?

*Flints*—Nothing, really nothing.

*Max.*—Oh, yes, I 'll be sworn you want one thing.

*Flints*—You would be a conjuror if you would guess it.

*Max.*—Well, I make no pretension to conjuring or thought reading, but I know it.

*Flints*—Well, what is it?

*Max.*—My absence to be sure! I know it's not convenient to bother you in your present novelty of feeling. Good morning, Flints, I 'll have my cigar in the garden —here comes Helene. Remember matrimony means grey hairs, bondage, and a brood of chickens; and yet, poor devil, you prefer it!

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Helene.*

*Helene*—Oh, good morning to my Stoic friend.

*Flints*—Good morning, Miss Helene. I see you are no sluggard when such a charming cluster of wild flowers you have so early gathered.

*Helene*—Oh, yes, I rise with the lark and enjoy nature in her softest moods; but you city gentlemen never enjoy such delightful moments.

*Flints*—Yes, of course, we do lose many of nature's charms by the inexorable routine of a city; but I fancy I am no match for you in rural philosophy.

*Helene*—I 'm glad to hear it; but a Stoic like your good self should be insensible both to pain and pleasure.

*Flints*—I fear that, if I were to examine myself closely, I would find precious little of the Stoic about me. That is an exquisite rose.

*Helene*—Will you accept of it? 'Tis the last rose of summer left blooming alone!

*Flints*—If I did, you would say I begged it—I made such an abrupt allusion to it.

*Helene*—Oh, no! I rather like abrupt allusions. Nature is no niggard, so I freely give it.

*Flints (aside)*—Now comes my chance! 'Tis very sweet, but still it has a thorn.

*Helene*—Then take good care you leave it not with me. Besides, it is its only weapon of defence—the cats have claws, the birds have beaks, the bees have stings, but we poor maidens are the most defenceless in all nature.

*Flints*—I'll be the thorn, if you'll be the rose.

*Helene*—The rose is plucked, I yet am on the stem.

*Flints*—Of course, I only meant in metaphor.

*Helene*—But the metaphor is faulty both ways—the thorn is sharp and you are—

*Flints*—Blunt and stupid, I suppose you meant to say.

*Helene*—How very conscious you are of your own merits! I would not be so uncharitable as tell you.

*Flints*—Well, then, suppose I represent the dew. Look how it nestles in each polished petal!

*Helene*—Oh, that's a watery wish! A valiant cavalier like your good self should have more solid ambition than to represent a tiny globule of dew: besides, the dew performs its duty well, perhaps you don't!

*Flints*—That is a rather formidable string of puns.

*Helene*—Well, I confess that I really lost the thread of what you meant to say, and so I put them on a string.

*Flints*—Oh, hang the puns !

*Helene*—Yes, hang them by their own string ; but don't you think this is idle chat ?

*Flints*—Extremely idle and unprofitable.

*Helene*—Well, can you engage me with anything more profitable ?

*Flints*—Nothing but the prospect of my early departure. I presume that will be good news ?

*Helene*—But, really, are you going away so soon ?

*Flints*—I intend to take my departure very soon. As a slight memorial of my visit here, might I solicit some small token—I mean a little trophy which might awaken my remembrance when in other lands of these glad moments ?

*Helene*—But are you, really, bound for other lands ?

*Flints*—It is my purpose to quit England soon, perhaps never to return.

*Helene*—How very distressing ! but I do trust that I have not ruffled your spirits ?

*Flints*—Oh, dear no, not a jot !

*Helene*—But, really, I think I have ; if so, forgive me. It was but nonsense that I chattered.

*Flints*—Well, I was bold enough to presume that the remembrance of the past might have awakened a more kindly feeling between us—I really thought so.

*Helene*—Ah, there you touch a delicate chord ! but now you are a heartless Stoic.

*Flints*—I confess I was such a fool.

*Helene*—And is the same unnatural creature ! Why, better

---

be an automaton, and save yourself the terrible trouble of being alive !

*Flints*—Helene, let me confess that I have worn a mask, but now 'tis gone, and my affections are again as fervent as in the happy past.

*Helene*—You turncoats are not to be believed.

*Flints*—Believe me in all charity.

*Helene*—Then, with the usual tradition of charity, I will begin at home—good morning my gallant hero! [Exit.

*Helene* (returning)—But I do hope I have not ruffled you. I fancy you are going to fight for fame and freedom like a true hero, for really one living, slaggardized at home, is apt to become very like a monumental mummy, a soldier of the porch—ha! ha! [Exit.

*Flints*—I am sneered at and satirised by the only being I ever loved. It is cruel of her, and yet I have treated her unkindly. I have one hope and one ambition, and I will go at once to put my resolution into shape!

[Exit.]

*Enter Captain Maxilby.*

*Max.*—So, so, Flints is warped again by that intriguing, satirical cousin of mine. This place is getting a perfect emporium for matrimonial chickens. I declare, if I breathe long this bewitching atmosphere, I will get entrammelled in the net too. That bewitching creature, Mabel, is always turning up wherever I go. She does touch a delicate chord somewhere, but where its exact localisation is I know not. Tush, what a fool am I—I 'll enjoy the sport while others make fools of themselves!—I 'll counterfeit a bit, but plague on 't,

counterfeiting is so contagious. Tush ! Tush ! There they swing ; he plucks a rose and gives it her with sentimental words no doubt. She chafes him, and enjoys a laugh of ridicule—a laugh which only women can enjoy. He gets cast down ; now they are seated, and the ice is breaking. By Jove, here comes my old dad growling like low thunder ! I 'm in for that bit of luck now, so I must look orthodox.

*Enter Major Maxilby.*

*Major*—The time and place is quite opportune. I 'll now gratify his curiosity. Ernest !

*Max.*—Ha, dad, how glad I am to see you looking so fresh and lively ; the fine air has positively made you look young again.

*Major*—Nonsense, boy, I never felt worse in all my life—never felt worse !

*Max.*—Perhaps a change of weather might—

*Major*—Bah !—a change of weather ? Why, this climate is all changes—enough to give people the dry rot !

*Max. (aside)*—I am to have tidings of that bit of luck now, so I 'll look orthodox. Yes, of course, our climate is changeable, and—

*Major*—Yes, yes, but I don't mean to enter into a long dissertation on climates ; I took this opportunity for a better purpose.

*Max. (aside)*—Ha ! he means to break the ice. Well, dad, I 'm all ears for your news.

*Major*—Very like !—are we alone ?

*Max.*—Oh, yes, perfectly isolated at present..

*Major*—Well, to be brief—I gave you a hint that Hicks Hardy's uncle has not forgotten you. It's a fact!

*Max.*—I'm really obliged, dad, but cannot comprehend.

*Major*—Don't be a fool. Can you not surmise?

*Max.*—Well, dad, I can marvel, but can't surmise.

*Major*—Well, Hardy is disinherited, and you possess half old Hicks's property. That's the substance of the will.

*Max.*—But this is incomprehensible!—I merit nothing at his hands.

*Major*—Don't die of surprise, but take your luck as you find it. As Hardy has defied me as his legal guardian, I mean to act to the very letter of the will.

*Max.*—But, really, explain; he has not defied you in anything.

*Major*—Why, Ernest, you are as blunt as a boulder! Has he not refused to marry my ward, Helene? Is she unworthy of his heart? Had he married her, and not thwarted my fixed intentions, I might have extended some charity towards him, but, as it is, I mean to act rigidly as the will directs. Now, Ernest, you are the proprietor of his fine estate; but, in the inheritance, there is a trifling condition, and I hope that you will obey me in the matter.

*Max.*—I shall be happy to obey you in anything reasonable, and think it is my duty to do so.

*Major*—Well, Ernest, to put a solid feature on your new inheritance, I have arranged, and it has cost me a good deal of anxiety, a nice little marriage for you.

*Max.*—A marriage, dad!

*Major*—Yes, a marriage. Why do you start as if it were your death warrant?

*Max.*—To me it's not much less—

*Major*—Why, Ernest, is it not a natural thing for a man to marry?

*Max.*—Well, I suppose it is, if it were exactly known when a man is a man—that's a questionable point.

*Major*—Why, a man is a man when he is major.

*Max.*—Well, you see, dad, I'm only captain yet.

*Major*—Tush, Ernest! you know what I mean; but a man is a man at maturity—after he has sown his wild oats, reaped the crop, and given over his youthful follies.

*Max.*—Well, I've not sown my wild oats yet, and matrimony, I'm afraid, would preclude the possibility of my doing so.

*Major*—Well, well; but what the devil is the use of sowing them at all?

*Max.*—To establish me a man by your own theory, you can't expect to see a fine crop of wisdom from an un-tilled, unmanured soil; if you did, it would only be a prodigy seen only when nature makes a mistake.

*Major*—Will you irritate me, Ernest?—remember that my temper is as smooth as ice when whole, but broken, 'tis as keen. It is in my power to disinherit you of this property if you disobey me. Come, come, now, Ernest, don't be a fool but just agree.

*Max.*—Well, I don't know what I have to agree to yet.

*Major*—Why, to marry, of course. Why, you rascal, what did I marry your mother for? Are you not obliged to me in this?

*Max.*—I admit my obligation most humbly.

*Major*—If I hadn't, you rogue, where would have been your good name?—your honourable rank? Why, you rascal, I'm ashamed of you.

*Max.*—Well, that's not complimentary to yourself to be ashamed of your own flesh and blood. But about this marriage?

*Major*—Ay, that's business like—well, you agree to marry?

*Max.*—Well, I can't marry a monument or enter into nuptial negotiation with a lamp-post. Be good enough to name the lady.

*Major*—Why, what has her name got to do with it?

*Max.*—Simply because I'll have to change it.

*Major*—Is it not enough that she is a woman?

*Max.*—Scarcely: I admit a trifling excellence in the sex, but 'tis often shadowed by their weaker virtues. Ah, dad, women are a risky speculation!

*Major*—Why, you talk of women as of manufactured goods.

*Max.*—Well, both glut the market by over production.

*Major*—Peace, Ernest, peace!—I'll hear no more of this. Remember, sir, your mother was a woman—peace to her ashes—a worthy woman!

*Max.*—I believe it in all reverence.

*Major*—Well, no more blasphemy against the sex. I have selected a lady with every qualification to make you a wife.

*Max.*—And a widow too, I presume. As for her name, I do not care how it sounds, but it must represent one

who has a little capital—one who must wear clothes to keep her person warm—one who wears no gaudy gewgaws about her head and nourishes on the scandal of the time—one who is like an echo, only speaking when 'tis spoken to—one who is youthful, tolerably handsome, loving and affectionate, capable of loving before sight; in short, an epitome of womanly excellence! Give me a woman with even the outlines of these, dad, and if I am to be incorporated by a matrimonial act, why, hang it, the sooner I marry her the better!

*Major*.—Where the deuce would you find a paragon like this? Woman is like ivy clinging round the tree, once give her the hold of the manly heart, and she will twine herself around it.

*Max.*.—And in the end smother it, I suppose.

*Major*.—I believe you would have to order one with all these ideal excellences, just as a customer orders a garment from his tailor.

*Max.*.—We have a privilege in business of returning if the article is unsuitable. That is denied in matrimony.

*Major*.—Zounds! Ernest do you mean to joke about it?

*Max.*.—Well, really, it's about the best joke I've heard for a long time. Just fancy a fellow like me assuming the pensive and sedate look of a married man—to enter into a practical treatise on housekeeping! Do I look like the father of a family, or the head of a household? But to begin with, name the lady.

*Major*.—Ay, that's a little more business like. Well, to be brief and plain, the lady I have selected to be your

wife is Hardacre's daughter, not that butterfly, Mabel, but that cultured girl, Florence. She has won my heart, and I am sure that she will make you a good wife—fit to share and guard your new inheritance. You see, Ernest, I just planned this visit so that I might get you into her society. Why, what the devil do you grin for?

*Max.*—I don't know, but I marvel at your gravity at so good a joke.

*Major*—Do you mean to joke at me, and thwart my proposals?

*Max.*—Well, I should be sorry to thwart you in anything reasonable, but when you enter on absurd proposals I must decline to follow you. You are my father, a good indulgent one, but it is quite impossible for me ever to entertain anything of your proposal.

*Major*—Well, don't, and follow the promptings of your own headstrong will—let it land you in poverty and disgrace.

*Max.*—I had hoped you had a better opinion of me.

*Major*—If you don't agree to this proposal of mine, I will cast you off and publish to the world that you are an ingrate, a spendthrift, and a villain—

*Max.*—Stop, sir, stop! The man who is capable of abusing his own son over such a trifling is not worthy the name of father.

*Major (aside)*—He's right; that atrocious east wind always runs my temper up. Well, Ernest, give me even the shadow of a reason why you disobey me.

*Max.*—For two reasons—firstly, as the prerogative of a man ; secondly, because I have two formidable rivals, one of which would be sure to defeat me.

*Major*—Rivals ?—Stuff ! this is a mere subterfuge. If you have rivals, pray, who are they ?

*Max.*—If their names will gratify you, I may mention that Sir Flimsey Flints is an aspiring suitor, but I fear his suit will fail and Hardy's will thrive.

*Major*—Oh, this is too irritating to believe.

*Max.*—Do you question the truthfulness of my statement ?

*Major*—Decidedly, I do !

*Max.*—That's tantamount to liar : whoever calls me such a name, I demand instant reparation and apology from the traducer, and I quit his company at once ; as you are my father, I shall not demand the former, but I certainly will exact the latter. [Going.]

*Major*—Hear me before you go ; I will disinherit you for this disobedience, and I will strain every limit of the will to give Hardy his property and birthright.

*Max.*—I care not ! Give Hardy his property ; it is his by right and justice, and I have no right or title to it. You do not punish me in being just, rather the opposite. [Exit.]

*Major*—What a headstrong rascal of a boy ! Now, he throws all my plans to the winds, and Hardacre's money will go to foreign hands, and my long dream of founding a rich family will be blasted. I 'll just have a talk with Hardacre, and see if his remarks are true about Sir Flimsey and Hardy ; if they are true, I will

try some diplomacy to gain my purposes. Oh ! my old bones.

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Hardacre and Sir Flimsey Flints.*

*Hard.*—Yes, yes, of course, Sir Flimsey, of course, but you see I have not yet exactly opened up the subject to my daughter, and it's rather a delicate subject you see, and—

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to add it is, my dear Hardacre, but you know, as a business man used to calculation, that time is money, and I do, do wish an interview with your daughter—I do, indeed !

*Hard.*—Yes, of course, Sir Flimsey, of course—let's see, I'll contrive to gain you an interview just before dinner to-day.

*Sir Flimsey*—Oh, thank you ! my dear Hardacre. You will understand that my feelings are a little pent up—I venture to add, a little pent up—pent up.

*Hard.*—Yes, I quite understand your feelings need release—I'll just go and prepare my daughter for the interview.

[*Exit.*]

*Sir Flimsey*—Thanks ! a thousand thanks ! I'll need to summon all my fascinating arts for this delicious interview. I feel all my boyish passions are returning again ; yet, I think it would be vastly better to rehearse the whole amorous scene through the garden. My dear Miss Hardacre—Florence let me call you—I lay at your feet— Hang it ! some one comes. I'll venture to rehearse it in the garden—yes, I'll venture to rehearse it !

*Re-enter Captain Maxilby and Lieutenant Flints.*

*Max.*—But really, my dear Flints, reflect on the feelings you will wound by this foolhardy resolve.

*Flints*—Tush ! talk not to me of feeling ! I will encounter anything to forward my purposes, and they require my immediate departure for the seat of war.

*Max.*—You astonish me, Flints ! What motive have you for such a perilous resolve ?

*Flints*—A burning motive, which will only be worthy of words if I am rewarded with success ; if not, let the motive die, and be buried in the nameless grave of its owner.

*Max.*—Am I right in conjecturing it is unrequited love ?

*Flints*—If you are my friend, refrain from further questions.

*Max.*—I 'll show my friendship palpably. If you are fixed in this resolve, I will accompany you to the seat of war, and share your perils—even share your fate.

*Flints*—My best, my truest friend ! No power can alter my fixed intention.. We must be off at once—my spirit chafes against this idleness.

*Max.*—Here comes my father. We had some warm words over a trifle, but I 'll bid him goodbye.

*Re-enter Major Maxilby.*

*Major (musingly)*—Confound Hardacre, where can he be ?

*Max.*—Sir, you are my father : as there is a breach between us, I shall say goodbye possibly for the last time.

*Major*—What do you mean now, Ernest ? Do you want to break your poor old father's heart ?

*Max.*—I wish I could break his ambitious pride. As my friend here and myself have both agreed to proceed to the Soudan, and as there are perils to encounter, I will say goodbye for the last time.

*Major*—Oh, this is monstrous! Going to the Soudan to be hacked to pieces by barbarians! What reason or motive have you for such a step?

*Max.*—We have our reasons; and we can easily be billeted for active service.

*Major*—Come now, Ernest, you only joke because I was a little rough with you in my proposals. Give up this foolish idea, and I will drop the project I had on hand.

*Max.*—We are both resolved, and cannot now retreat. We go to pack our luggage to catch the evening mail for London. Will you not say goodbye for the last time?

*Major*—Oh, what an avalanche of troubles fall on me! Ernest; give this project up.

*Max.*—'Tis not in my power. Goodbye, dad!

*Major*—Goodbye, Ernest!

(*The Major sinks into a chair overcome.*)

*Tableau and picture.*

END OF ACT II.

**A C T III.**

*SCENE I.—AN APARTMENT IN HARDACRE'S.*

*Florence and Milly alone.*

*Flo.*—And so you say, Milly, that your new footman is not so adapted to the work as Lurks?

*Milly*—No! ma'am; he's such a terribly polite novice—breaks no end o' crockery, and begs as many pardons as would make a sinner of a saint. He's a good for nothing buttersnipe, and that I tell him. I hear it said that he has come down a peg, and he looks it.

*Flo.*—Indeed, Milly, this is strange: though he is green I hope he is willing and will improve. But, Milly, would you get some odds and ends from the town for me?

*Milly*—Yes, ma'am.

*Flo.*—Prepare yourself; in half an hour I will ring for you.

*Milly*—Yes, ma'am!

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Hardacre.*

*Hard.*—Florence, I see that you are alone.

*Flo.*—Yes, papa, I am alone; but why this shadow on your face?

*Hard.*—The shadow has a cause, and I will tell you of it. Florence, I have sought this private interview with you for a special—I may say a painful—purpose.

*Flo.*—There is a strangeness in your words and looks I dare not comprehend.

*Hard.*—Listen to me, and my words are to be brief. As your father, I must tell you that you have been guilty of a very grave, but perhaps thoughtless, impropriety.

*Flo.*—I pray you what is my fault? Have I erred in duty to you as a daughter?

*Hard.*—Florence, your offence is worse than being undutiful. Have you not broken through the modest decorum of society, and violated the modesty that should characterise your maidenhood, and admitted lovers—adventurers—into your apartments by stealth and at unseasonable hours? which has so insulted some of my guests that they have departed in disgust?

*Flo.*—I only know that I am loved, and that I love in return.

*Hard.*—Peace, Florence, I say: this is the seductive romance only of the imagination and winds about the adventurer. You do not know the snares and deceits of actual life. You must forget this military adventurer, whose sole object is but to rob you of your honour and I of my only hope.

*Flo.*—You wrong yourself, indeed, to harbour such a thought. If ever you cherished anything of an opinion of me, I pray you extend the same to him, for he loves me dearly and devotedly.

*Hard.*—Peace, girl, peace, no more of this shallow sentimentiality; you must forget him from this instant, and must rise to your level in society. I have made appointment of your hand already. If you are not led by me, and if you scorn my choice, never call me your parent again. Later in the day I will be more explicit.

In the meantime, the time is not at my disposal to enter more fully into the matter, but remember that what I say I mean, and every word is resolute! [Exit.

*Enter Hardy.*

*Hardy*—Dearest Florence! your looks are mixed, which tell me that there is some unspoken peril. Tell me the cause of this cloud and change?

*Flo*.—I fain would hide this shadow on my heart, but since 'tis useless, I will tell you all. This moment my father has left me with words of hot rebuke still ringing in my ears.

*Hardy*—For what, dear Florence?

*Flo*.—He spoke of impropriety—strange terms society can coin to cover natural feeling!—rebuked me for that moment when my green heart burst its fetters and spoke in one great throb of love. But, dear heart, be gone. I tremble for our safety. I hear a noise, and active eyes are on us.

*Hardy*—Ay, that is true; but, dear one, don't misgive—our stratagem will prosper yet.

*Flo*.—I doubt it not; but how my pity flows when in some lowly drudgery you are; I fain would, at times, tear this mask upon my face, and challenge all my parents' spleen and spite, to launch their worst upon me for my love!

*Hardy*—Patience, dearest, my humble offices, toilsome and irksome at times, are dignified when I remember the prize I win.

*Flo.*—Our perils but begin : I fear it much that my father has already appointed my hand, and Sir Flimsey Flints he intends to be my husband. 'Tis nearly like a jest to see how men will barter, traffic, and exchange for worldly advancement the heart's best affections. Before I acted such treason to my heart, I would throw away all filial allegiance and walk the world alone with you and love !

*Hardy*—But blessings on you, dearest, for this faith and trust ; but in this climax of our loves, and this sore strait, must our wits be outwitted, and such a tactician as old Flints even win one step advancement in his suit ? What say you, Florence ?

*Flo.*—Let 's see. How can I rid me of his presence ? I see the glimmer of another stratagem—'tis somewhat hazy, but now it dawns brightly. Oh ! love, how sweet and cunning are your inventions ! Listen, I 'll say, as we in truth have counterfeits to fit, I have a lover at the seat of war, and, to weave it with a sentiment, I 'll say we parted in a heat of words, and send him there (and he is fond of savage enterprise)—with this old ring as a memorial of my penitence to him whom I have wronged. I 'll put it better when the action points. What say you ?

*Hardy*—A subtle stratagem, and speaks the wondrous wit of woman ! It will gain his credence, seeing that my two Stoic friends have gone so abruptly there.

*Flo.*—The circumstances fit so beautifully. I 'll give my lover a fictitious name, and charge my pilgrim, who will be your rival, and Sir Flimsey Flints, on his

honesty to find him out amid the harrowing scenes, and to give him this ring. If he return with inauspicious news it will unmask his perfidy, but if he comes with news of ill success, it will bespeak his honesty; but in the interim you may gain the road to my father's heart—love may sweeten and take all peril away.

*Hardy*—A wonderful device!

*Flo*.—'Tis a bold stratagem; but shall we try it?

*Hardy*—Success is sure, for the keen soul that conceived it will draw the stratagem to auspicious issues. Try it!

*Flo*.—Then leave the stratagem to me, and, spurred by love, trust my generalship. I hear footsteps. 'Tis he!

*Hardy*—Love give you courage to succeed. [Exit.]

*Enter Sir Flimsey Flints and Mrs. Hardacre.*

*Mrs. Hard*.—But I do hope, Sir Flimsey, that our tame attractions yield you some enjoyment.

*Sir Flimsey*—Far beyond my expectations. I can assure you I have enjoyed myself immensely; and I venture to observe that the prospect over your garden wall is positively charming—wood, river, vale and—and—and—sky make such an agreeable contrast—so charming to the painter's eye. But I venture to observe that your daughter is here.

*Mrs. Hard*.—Oh, yes, Sir Flimsey, she is so studious, you see; always among her books. By the way, Sir Flimsey, this is a nice opportunity for you. I will withdraw, Sir Flimsey: the time is very apt. [Exit.]

*Sir Flimsey*—Yes, of course, my dear Mrs. Hardacre.

(*Aside*)—Well, I suppose I may as well espouse my

views in the meantime. I think that I am pretty well rehearsed in the scene. So now, I wonder where my perfumes are ? That rose has left such a disagreeable odour. (*Coughs.*) My dear Miss Hardacre I perceive you are alone—yes, alone I see, and—

*Flo.*—Not alone while you are here, besides I have a good companion in my book.

*Sir Flimsey*—And do you prefer to be alone ?

*Flo.*—It much depends upon my visitor. I pray you to be seated.

*Sir Flimsey*—Oh, thanks ! Miss Hardacre, you are so engaging. I venture to add that—that—that—

*Flo.*—Nay, do not venture but be bold to add ; I rather like a fluent speaker. (*Aside*)—The affected old coxcomb !

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah, you flatter me, Miss Hardacre ! I have, I confess, no special talent that way. Instead of talking, I thought a deal.

*Flo.*—Did you begin your intellectual pursuits late ?

*Sir Flimsey*—Oh, dear, no ! ever since I was a boy.

*Flo.*—Some men are only boys all their lives.

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah, yes ! I venture to add that Nature sometimes will disguise herself, and be youthful in spite of the rime of years ; but, of course, it argues a well-spent youth.

*Flo.*—I think it is grotesque when men attempt to gain an artificial youth when nature is in natural decay. Of course, I speak merely in the abstract. But I have heard your reputation as an orator and public man.

*Sir Flimsey*—Not exactly an orator, Miss Hardacre, neither can I be called by any stretch of fancy a public man. I prefer to be only a spectator on human affairs, and stand apart like a philosopher. True, I can take the chair at the meeting of our newly organised Undermining Company—a capital concern in which your good papa is a fortunate shareholder; but I suppose this has no interest for you?

*Flo*.—When your dividends are paid I suppose it means a little interest to me, though indirectly. But don't you think the Company is rather unlimited—not to say, suspicious? Besides, I hear the shares are at a great premium, which is also suspicious?

*Sir Flimsey*—Nay, my dear Miss Hardacre, you are wrong; it is the best Joint Stock Company floated for years, and guarantees fifteen per cent.

*Flo*.—Apparently it is all right; but is there not a leveling down process in the course of time from the inflation of a momentary success to the natural grooves of true prosperity? I do think that the majority of these companies are only tempting phantoms, as dazzling as they are unsubstantial, and but the offshoots of hollow enterprise.

*Sir Flimsey (aside)*—I venture to think that this girl knows a trifle more than she should. Where has the green girl sucked this common sense? There is nothing so formidable in a woman as a little knowledge. She makes a point of it at times—a double point! Nay, my dear Miss Hardacre, you are entirely wrong. True, loosely organised concerns go to the wall, which

is, of course, prejudicial to more solid ventures; but let us change the subject. I venture to add that this interview was, I may say, purposed. Have you recollection, Miss Hardacre?

*Flo.*—My memory freshens; you came about—

*Sir Flimsey*—Yes, exactly! Miss Hardacre.

*Flo.*—You came to offer me your—

*Sir Flimsey*—Exactly! and I venture to add humbly—

*Flo.*—Your portrait, I think it was.

*Sir Flimsey (aside)*—Zounds! is she fooling me? I venture to observe that you are mistaken. If you are playful, I do offer you my portrait, my real portrait—myself, my heart, and all my possessions!

*Flo.*—Sir Flimsey! I do not comprehend. What did you offer me did you say?

*Sir Flimsey*—My portrait, if you will—my living self!

*Flo.*—Should I accept, would you expect a portrait in return?

*Sir Flimsey*—I need no other portrait but yourself.

*Flo.*—Indeed! but, surely, I should have a small voice in the matter. I wish to leave some copies of myself—indeed, the wish is natural.

*Sir Flimsey*—But, really, Miss Hardacre, you are masking your true feelings for a little diversion. Florence! I love you dearly, and I wish you to be mine!

*Flo.*—Oh, Sir Flimsey! is there such intensity at your age?

*Sir Flimsey*—Age! Miss Hardacre?—I yet am in the possession of health and strength. I think some one is eavesdropping.

*Flo.*—It is but the birds twittering on the trees.

*Sir Flimsey*—Very unruly birds to twitter and break the string of my ardent ideas.

*Flo.*—It is their mode of laughing. Sir Flimsey, do you know what I liken you to ?

*Sir Flimsey*—I shall be happy to hear.

*Flo.*—But should it be distasteful to you ?

*Sir Flimsey*—Nothing can be distasteful coming from these lips.

*Flo.*—Well, I think you resemble a hawk in the plumes of a peacock, and a fad in the finery of a sybarite.

*Sir Flimsey*—Really : but you stray from the point. I do not quarrel with your little diversions ; but may I venture to enquire if there is any obstacle in the way?

*Flo.*—Ah, Sir Flimsey ! you now strike a manful chord. There is an obstacle—an insuperable barrier possibly.

*Sir Flimsey*—Name it, and I will take every means to remove it.

*Flo.*—'Tis that which is superior to all social laws, the love of like—the like which draws to like. You have a rival whom I deeply love.

*Sir Flimsey*—A rival ! Miss Hardacre ? Your good papa knows nothing of this.

*Flo.*—You will not tell tales out of school, Sir Flimsey ?

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to think that your estimate of me is rather low.

*Flo.*—I only did surmise ; I did not say a fact.

*Sir Flimsey*—I observe : but I have a curiosity to know who my rival is.

*Flo.*—Mark the ring which circles here my finger. It was placed there by him who holds my heart. Is it not fitly emblematic of our loves without an end?

*Sir Flimsey*—If you are playful, I venture to add that it has also no beginning.

*Flo.*—'Tis true that I have spoken, and if you cherish one grain of respect for me, will you do me one especial favour?

*Sir Flimsey*—I shall be delighted to assist you in any way.

*Flo.*—When last your rival and myself met, we had a violent quarrel. He was so stung by my embittered words that he went madly to the seat of war, there to quench his frenzy and despair. He is gone, and we may never see each other more.

*Sir Flimsey*—Indeed, this is very affecting.

*Flo.*—I have but one wish, and I have reckoned on your generous aid to gratify it. Will you, Sir Flimsey, in token of your respect for me, repair at once to those harrowing scenes of warfare, where perchance your rival may be lying pale and pillowless? If you can find him give him this ring, and say that if he should fall, to take it to the shroudless grave with him as a last memorial of my love and penitence, and a final trophy of our broken ties.

*Sir Flimsey*—This is very affecting. I'll be your courier at once. In fact, I have business in Egypt, and I will be your pilgrim at the same time.

*Flo.*—Oh, thanks, Sir Flimsey for your generous aid. But you will be secret?

*Sir Flimsey*—Honour will lock it in my bosom ! It is, indeed, a sacred, holy trust, and I venture to say that I will prove trustworthy.

*Flo*.—I have no doubt, Sir Flimsey, but that you will act with all the disinterested spirit of humanity, and not as a jealous rival.

*Sir Flimsey*—I will, Miss Hardacre ; and if I do discharge my mission well, will then my suit begin to thrive ?

*Flo*.—I will assure you that you will grow doubly dearer in my esteem if you discharge this mission to my satisfaction, and I will engage to weigh your suit again with fuller spirit than I now can do.

*Sir Flimsey*—Oh, thanks, Miss Hardacre ! I will retire a moment, and return for fuller particulars of my pilgrimage. Really, 'tis so affecting ! If my life is ended in such a sweet service, it is, indeed, well spent. I venture to— Really, 'tis so affecting—really, my eyes are dewy.

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Hardy.*

*Hardy*—A subtle piece of generalship !

*Flo*.—How played ?

*Hardy*.—Excelling well !

(*Enter Mrs. Hardacre as the lovers embrace. She starts with surprise.*)

*Tableau and picture.*

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—AN APARTMENT IN HARDACRE'S.

*Mr. and Mrs. Hardacre seated.*

*Mr. Hard.*—I tell you, wife, that time will bring things all right. I am quite sure of it.

*Mrs. Hard.*—And I tell you that time will bring things all wrong. I am certain of it! Has not Mabel eloped with some fellow? This comes of your ruling—making us the targets of our neighbours' ridicule—and has not Florence frightened poor Sir Flimsey away?

*Mr. Hard.*—Nothing of the kind, wife! Sir Flimsey told me that he had business in Egypt; besides, it is but natural that he would go and search for his foolhardy son. He said he might be silent for a little time.

*Mrs. Hard.*—A little time?—three months a little time? It is an age to one who feeds on expectancy!

*Mr. Hard.*—Well, it's a pretty light diet, but the desert may not be so palatable.

*Mrs. Hard.*—Do you mean to make light of the matter? I tell you that Florence has another lover, and if you watch that footman, Skeems, and her, you will find them rather too familiar. Ugh! I've seen it. A footman!

*Mr. Hard.*—This is another stretch of your accommodating fancy; but I may tell you that I have come to like that boy, and I think there is the proper stuff in him; and if he does behave himself, why, I will make a man of him.

*Mrs. Hard.*—Oh, you had better make his will superior to mine! I find urgent reasons for his dismissal.

*Mr. Hard.*—And I find great necessity for his remaining here.

*Mrs. Hard.*—In the direction of this household, have I not one little vote?

*Mr. Hard.*—I pay the taxes, and the votes are mine, big and little. Wait till you get the franchise—and you will wait!

*Mrs. Hard.*—Mr. Hardacre, you are a man without a spark of taste or chivalry! I will read pages of romance and highest art, and you will yawn for the dirty market ciphers.

*Mr. Hard.*—And pray, Mrs. Hardacre, what are you? What say your scandal sisters? Have they given you a diploma for excellence in the high art of character-breaking?

*Mrs. Hard.*—I'll not stay, sir, to be insulted further! but if pens and ink can aid me, I will be rid of one conspirator. That sly, intriguing Helene leaves this roof at once!

*Mr. Hard.*—Helene stays here as long as I choose! and now, mark my orders, since I must show authority, I expect Mr. Twicks to-day. I say use and treat him well, and no half and half spirit about his welcome. You understand, I suppose?

*Mrs. Hard.*—I understand well how to treat these pettifogging clowns! They are your bosom brethren, and I can easily take a hint from such a faithful copy of a clown as yourself!

[Exit.]

*Mr. Hard.*—Well, here's some of the select sweetness of wedlock. How she does irritate me at times! She lives upon the prospects of Swiss villas, lords and ladies, and all that. She'll have her hobby, and I don't mean to deprive her of the shadow; but hang me for the clown she calls me if ever she sees the substance!

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Twicks.*

*Twicks*—It's rather dangerous I find to be too familiar. I climbed the garden wall, and those atrocious spikes I see have injured the superfine surface of my pants. Well, since I am here, I'll have a look around. Rather a tidy place to take an inventory in. Let's see, pictures, libels on nature; mirrors, casting unpleasant reflections; carpets, like the servants, requiring to be beaten—but it's no business of mine if I can only get his cheque for these infernal shares. Ha! some one comes—the kitchen wench I suppose.

*Enter Milly.*

*Milly*—Oh, dear, me, that good for nothing footman. If I could only get his ears well pulled—and Miss Florence will not hear a word either. I think there's a wheel within a wheel.

*Twicks*—Well, miss, may I enquire if the proprietor of this rural and retired villa is at home?

*Milly*—Is it master or missus you want?

*Twicks*—The proprietor, miss, not the proprietrix!

*Milly*—Are you the showman with the queer tricks?

*Twicks*—In the cut of my profile, and the dignity of my carriage, can you see any shadow of the showman? Announce me to your master, and I shall have instant and cordial reception.

*Milly*—None of your dodges, showman. Do you think my master keeps company with such a dingy-looking mountebank like you? If he did, my services would soon cease.

*Twicks*—Will you convey my card?—it will speak better.

*Milly*—Why, I believe this is your ticket-of-leave, and, as my master is a magistrate, you want it extended.

*Twicks*—This is positively unbearable! I will forgive this professional insult, if you give me the use of a needle and thread for two seconds. You see the work of these spikes?

*Milly*—Ay, that's sensible, showman. Just step round to the kitchen, and I will accommodate you.

*Twicks*—Maiden, I am transported!

*Milly*—Not the first time, I suppose, showman. [Exeunt.

*Enter Florence and Helene.*

*Flo.*—Will nothing lift your drooping spirits, cousin? Our favourite pastimes now have lost their charms, and a perpetual gloom has lingered over you. Tell me, cousin, can I remove that shadow on your heart?

*Helene*—I feel a sympathetic chord is touched between us. I have long striven to give utterance to my thoughts, but they always seemed to choke me. I know 'tis very ungrateful of me to be so melancholy, but its source is

in a hidden sorrow. Cousin, do you remember that night when Lieutenant Flints and Captain Maxilby took their abrupt departure for the seat of war?

*Flo.*—Ay, vividly, cousin; and we marvelled at their hasty departure. Does this affect you?

*Helene*—Oh, cousin, I am a guilty wretch, and only merit your contempt.

*Flo.*—Why, what mean you cousin? Your looks denote some terrible pressure at your heart.

*Helene*—It is the pressure of penitence and remorse. Listen to my story. I once was engaged to Lieutenant Flints, but it was at a period when both our hearts were hardly capable of enduring bonds. Time passed on, and our engagement was forgotten; but I meant to triumph over him in some shape. Opportunity offered while he stayed a guest here. He almost avowed his love for me, but as revenge I called him no hero and a monumental mummy, which so incensed him that, in a heat of frenzy and wounded pride, he departed for the seat of war. His friend accompanied him, and if they fall, what will I be, cousin? What will I be?

*Flo.*—This is, indeed, stranger than fiction; in fact, there is a shade of destiny in your story; but, cousin, I share in this romantic episode, but not so sadly as yourself, so I shall open wide my heart to you, but, mark, this is the postman. Courage, dear cousin. I warrant some news. [Exit.

*Helene*—I have relieved my burdened heart—a kindred spirit does divide a sorrow. I tremble for her news.

*Re-enter Florence.*

*Helene*—Oh, cousin, what news?

*Flo.*—Yes; from the seat of war. I tremble to unfold the news—'tis from Sir Flimsey Flints—but listen; I will explain at once. Now, listen, cousin. (*Florence reads.*) “My dear Miss Hardacre,—After a series of severe encounters, I at length arrived at the scene of hostilities. I venture to say that you cannot know the dangers I have passed in the zealous prosecution of my mission. Twice I was taken as a spy and ordered to be shot at dawn, and had it not been for the timely interference of an English friend your pilgrim would have never returned. I have your treasure still, but I have gained assurance that I will be able to end my mission successfully.”

*Helene*—It sounds an enigma to me, cousin, yet not a word if he be safe.

*Flo.*—It must be so; but I'll explain all—listen. “I found my boy in the hospital and his foolhardy friend—rash boys—I have sent them home.”

*Helene*—Thank God that they are safe!

*Flo.*—Ah! cousin, now I see the captive smile returns to brighten your face, but list. “Transmission of letters is so difficult and precarious that you need not be surprised should your pilgrim be with you as soon.—Your devoted, Flimsey Flints.” Now, cousin, you have heard much that will be romantic, much that will be enigmatical to you; but come, I hear a footstep, let us go into the arbour, and I will tell you a story flavouring of fiction in its absurdity.

*Helene*—I thirst to hear, for, by your sprightly spirits, I am sure your tidings will amuse. [Exit.]

*Enter Hardacre and Twicks.*

*Hard.*—Ah! Mr. Twicks, so you've come at last. I thought I saw you in the road half an hour ago.

*Twicks*—True, my dear sir, but we are not guaranteed against accidents.

*Hard.*—I hope nothing has befallen you.

*Twicks*—Well, nothing serious; only, on presenting myself at your good mansion, I was ignominiously kicked out, and, worse, called a showman and a ticket-of-leave.

*Hard.*—Monstrous! Mr. Twicks; I will investigate at once.

*Twicks*—No need, my dear sir, I have had amends.

*Hard.*—But, really, to think that I should engage such a barbarian that cannot distinguish between a gentleman and a clown.

*Twicks*—Yes, my dear sir, a gentleman could always be distinguished with a little scrutiny; but let's introduce a little business.

*Hard.*—Certainly, Mr. Twicks, certainly, and to make things run smoother we'll first introduce a bottle of my best Burgundy.

*Twicks*—Burgundy? the name is inspiration!

*Hard.*—Well, Mr. Twicks, I suppose you have allotted me a few Undermining shares?

*Twicks*—Yes, a few; but there is a great run on them. Here are the certificates.

*Hard.*—Ah, thank you ! Sir Flimsey has kept his promise.

Just help yourself till I run over the prospectus again.

*Twicks (aside)*—The longer you are the better for my throat.

*Hard.*—Let me see, the first land will be—

*Twicks (aside)*—In the bankruptcy court, I 'll be sworn.

*Hard.*—Capital investment ! Capital investment !

*Twicks (aside)*—Forgery and fraud—capital enough.

*Hard.*—The most valuable mines in the world.

*Twicks (aside)*—The shareholders' pockets—I 'm a digger.

*Hard.*—Well, Mr. Twicks, I 'm decidedly well pleased. I think the enterprise a good one.

*Twicks*—I 'm glad to hear it ; and you are very fortunate.

*Hard.*—Well, to put a substantial feature on my approval, here is your cheque—(*handing cheque*).

*Twicks*—Two thousand five hundred pounds—right, my dear sir, and a thousand thanks.

*Hard.*—Now, that being settled, fill your glass and drink to the success of the company.

*Twicks*—Heartily, and pledge its success. Now, my dear sir, as you are aware that time in our profession, is a valuable item, you will pardon my hasty departure.

*Hard.*—Certainly, Mr. Twicks, certainly, I know that your profession won't let the grass grow beneath your heels.

*Twicks*—No, my dear sir, we are not so green. (*Aside*)—Now to old Maxilby—I have him 'neath my thumb !

*Hard.*—Who have you beneath your thumb, Mr. Twicks ?

*Twicks*—Only a gad-fly, my dear sir. Adieu ! [Exit.]

*Hard.*—Good morning, Mr. Twicks. It's rather a heavy speculation this I've gone into, but Sir Flimsey would not recommend anything risky.

*Enter Mrs. Hardacre in haste.*

*Mr. Hard.*—Now, now, wife, what is the matter now?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Oh, you unfeeling man! Tell me how looks my hair—where is my rouge?

*Mr. Hard.*—Why, what the devil is the matter now? Have you lost the little wit that you had?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Will you not be polite when the illustrious Sir Flimsey is at the door?

*Mr. Hard.*—Sir Flimsey at the door? Why, I'm surprised—I'll go at once and welcome him.

*Mrs. Hard.*—Just stay a moment till I adjust my toilet.

*Mr. Hard.*—Tush, you old fool!—I'll go at once. [Exit.

*Mrs. Hard.*—Oh, that he had the spark of chivalry! but he is so unfashionable and rude.

*Enter Sir Flimsey and Hardacre.*

*Hard.*—Ah, my dear Sir Flimsey, I am so glad to see you after your long and perilous journey! How are you?

*Sir Flimsey.*—Moderately well, my dear Hardacre. My dear Mrs. Hardacre, how are you?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Oh, Sir Flimsey, pretty well; but I really thought some terrible mishap had befallen you.

*Sir Flimsey.*—The most natural surmise; but I may say my mission is now over. My son, rash boy, is on his way home. But may I venture to enquire if your daughter be well?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Pretty well, Sir Flimsey, but sadly out of spirits by your long absence.

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah! I daresay; but may I enquire if she received my letter?

*Mrs. Hard.*—I don't know, Sir Flimsey, but I 'll enquire.

*Sir Flimsey*—Do, my dear Mrs. Hardacre, and so oblige.

[*Exit.*]

*Hard.*—Well, Sir Flimsey, you must have exciting news to tell; these battles in the Soudan—sorties and all that.

*Sir Flimsey*—Nonsense, my dear Hardacre; my experience was limited, but I venture to acquaint you that I had a mission to the seat of war from your daughter, Florence.

*Hard.*—A message from Florence to the seat of war? Why, it is inexplicable.

*Sir Flimsey*—Yes, a very sacred, holy trust, and as her humble pilgrim I venture to say that I have succeeded well.

*Hard.*—Sir Flimsey, you really astonish me.

*Sir Flimsey*—I will acquaint you more fully anon. In the meantime I may say that I have tidings for our mutual friend, Major Maxilby.

*Hard.*—Oh, yes, of course; I understand his son went along with yours. Is he on his way home too?

*Sir Flimsey*—Not exactly; he shares some scars: but may I request the services of your boy to aid the transport of my portmanteau?

*Hard.*—Certainly, Sir Flimsey, certainly!

*Sir Flimsey*—Thanks, my dear Hardacre! Ah, I perceive your daughter comes. Alas! that I should turn that laughter into woe.

*Hard.*—What mean you, Sir Flimsey? your remarks are perfectly puzzling.

*Sir Flimsey*—My dear Hardacre, the enigma will soon be solved. Forbear a little: but may I request the favour of a private interview? Our meeting will be sacred.

*Hard.*—Yes, of course; but it does seem a little enigmatical to me. But I've no doubt it will be all right.

*Sir Flimsey*—Retire, my dear sir; your daughter comes.

*Hard. (aside)*—What does this puzzle mean? [Exit.

*Enter Florence and Helene.*

*Flo.*—I told you, cousin, I would make you laugh. Is it not romantic?

*Helene*—It is; and has a shade of destiny too.

*Flo.*—Was it not strange that I should anticipate your circumstances, and send my pilgrim to the seat of war precisely on your errand? But all is not done. I mean to laugh much more ere victory crowns my stratagems. Oh! Sir Flimsey, are you here? Oh! have you got the ring?

*Sir Flimsey*—My dear Florence, it is my—

*Flo.*—Oh! do not trifle with one vain word. Tell me the worst in fewest words. Is he?—is he?—O speak!  
*(Aside)*—Hush, cousin!

*Sir Flimsey*—My dear Florence, I have parted with the ring.

*Flo.*—Then, that denotes that he has— O speak!  
Your silence is daggers to my heart.

*Sir Flimsey*—Alas! I grieve to say that he is dead.

*Flo.*—Dead! Oh, my poor Hardy!—dead!

(*Florence feigns to faint in Helene's arms.*)

*Enter Mrs. Hardacre and Mr. Hardacre.*

*Hard.*—What does this scene mean, Sir Flimsey?

*Sir Flimsey*—I cannot speak—grief seals my lips.

*Mrs. Hard.*—It is excess of joy that has overpowered her.

*Flo.* (to *Helene*)—This is the climax of my stratagem!

Hush, cousin!

*Scene closes.*

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**SCENE II.—EXTERIOR OF HARDACRE'S  
HOUSE.**

*Enter Twicks.*

*Twicks*—That wine of Hardacre's has been too good for me. I've bled him very neatly—hic—now I mean to bleed old Maxilby. I have the old fox under my heel. If he doesn't stump up a tidy sum, I publish the will to the world. Now, to the old fox! I hear some footsteps. I'll move forward now, and beard the fox in his den!

[*Exit.*]

*Enter Sir Flimsey Flints and Hardy (as footman).*

*Sir Flimsey*—Thank Fate that touching scene is over!

Boy!

*Hardy*—Yes, sir!

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to think that you know the road to old Maxilby's cottage?

*Hardy*—I know the road very well—'tis only a few minutes' walk.

*Sir Flimsey*—Good! Just open my portmanteau, and give it care, boy. Fetch me my perfumes. The atmosphere is thick and fetid here.

*Hardy (aside)*—The old coxcomb! The woods are all perfume, sir.

*Sir Flimsey*—Yes, boy, quite true; but it is very vulgar—I venture to add, very indelicate. Nature is a very great but vulgar perfumer. Rimmel is infinitely better!

*Hardy*—Shall I advance, sir?

*Sir Flimsey*—Nay, stay, boy, there is no hurry: by the way, what is your name?

*Hardy*—Skeems, sir.

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah! Skeems is it? I venture to add, a very strange but appropriate name.

*Hardy*—Very!

*Sir Flimsey*—Have you been long with old Hardacre?

*Hardy*—Some months now.

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah! then you will know something of his private affairs?

*Hardy*—Yes, I know a little.

*Sir Flimsey*—Just you rehearse the little that you know, while I enjoy my cigar, and this sovereign is yours.

*Hardy*—Do you mean to bribe me?

*Sir Flimsey*—Well, not exactly: you can tell me if he keeps much company; who his favourite visitors are; the extent of his liberality. Come now, boy!

*Hardy*—My master, sir, pays me for my services, which include faith and trust in all matters, and I mean to be trustworthy.

*Sir Flimsey*—One in your station should have nothing to do with such scruples.

*Hardy*—Then, all the morality is reserved for the higher stratas of society. You are wrong, sir!

*Sir Flimsey*—Where the deuce have you learned all this morality?

*Hardy*—From the meanness and hypocrisies of others. Sir, my honesty is my only property, which admits of no barter; when I lose it I may be cast adrift even by the very parasites that corrupted me!

*Sir Flimsey*—Now, boy, this is intolerable, and if I were to break a whisper to your master about this doing—

*Hardy*—My master being honest himself, he would give no ear to poisoned whispers.

*Sir Flimsey*—Well, well, boy; but did you ever hear in the course of your service Florence—I mean Miss Hardacre—speak of me?

*Hardy*—Who are you, sir?

*Sir Flimsey*—A baronet—a gentleman, boy!

*Hardy*—No!

*Sir Flimsey*—You never heard my name, Sir Flimsey Flints, mentioned?

*Hardy*—Oh! yes, I have.

*Sir Flimsey*—Oh, I thought so! Spoke she of me affectionately?

*Hardy*—I took no observance.

*Sir Flimsey*—But I believe it, boy : by the way, Skeems, did you ever observe any other visitors—I mean rivals, boy—no, I mean any dashing young fellows ?

*Hardy*—No ; but I 've seen a painted, perfumed, antique fool forcing his society on her.

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah ! I have a curiosity to know who he might be. How old might this great fool be ?

*Hardy*—About your own age, sir.

*Sir Flimsey*—The audacious old fool. I must investigate this at once. I 've won her heart, and cannot allow any flirtation. Did you ever observe any other, boy ?

*Hardy*—Oh, yes, I have !

*Sir Flimsey*—Indeed, Skeems ! Ah, yes, I remember there once was a military upstart had the audacity to address her, but he is dead, and that is an end to it.

*Hardy (aside)*—Is he dead, old fox ?

*Sir Flimsey*—Do you remember him, boy ?

*Hardy*—Oh, yes, I do.

*Sir Flimsey*—A toy for ladies boudoirs—a piece of animated wax ! How old might you say he was, boy ?

*Hardy*—Well, about my own age, sir.

*Sir Flimsey*—Nay, boy, you are wrong. He might have been a trifle younger than myself.

*Hardy*—Just a trifle ! Shall we push on, sir, it 's getting late ?

*Sir Flimsey*—Well, yes, presently. Give me my cigar case. Now, I am fully equipped ! You know the road, I suppose ?

*Hardy*—Quite well.

*Sir Flimsey*—Old Maxilby and I are going to pay off some old scores. Fortune seems literally to have strewn my path with roses. Twicks and I understand each other well.

*Hardy*—Shall I advance, sir?

*Sir Flimsey*—Tarry a trifle—linger at my heel. [Exit.

*Hardy*—The office of a dog! Go on, my sweet Sir Flimsey, I may soon make up with you! [Exit.

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**SCENE III.—EXTERIOR OF MAJOR MAXILBY'S VILLA.**

(*The Major seated on a rustic seat.*)

*Major*—Three months gone, and no word of my poor boy, Ernest. It is supposed that he died in the desert, and all through my caprice. Heigh ho! How wretched are we when we are unfaithful. I am the tool, the slave, of that thumbscrew of an attorney, Twicks. But I'll be no longer his puppet, but publish to the world— A knock! I wonder who can be at the garden gate at this late hour?

*Enter Sir Flimsey Flints and Hardy.*

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah, my dear Major! how are you?

*Major*—Sir Flimsey, is it you?—of all men in the world I would least expect you.

*Sir Flimsey*—I daresay; but only the unexpected happens. I venture to add that I have urgent tidings for you.

*Major*—Anything concerning my poor boy, Sir Flimsey?

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to say I have some news of him.

*Major*—And he is safe, Sir Flimsey?

*Sir Flimsey*—He shares some scars, but he is safe.

*Major*—Thank heaven for that!—and the other rash roysters, what of them?

*Sir Flimsey*—My tidings of them partake of some sadness.

I closed poor Hardy's eyes in death!

*Major*—My poor boy dead, Sir Flimsey?

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to add 'tis true, too true! Really, how affecting!

*Hardy (aside)*—How very affecting, old fox!

*Major*—How I loved that boy, Sir Flimsey. And is he, really, dead?

(*The Major is overcome. Sir Flimsey joins hands, and feigns sorrow.*)

*Hardy (aside)*—Which is the sterling, and which is the counterfeit?

*Sir Flimsey*—And so you did love poor Hardy?

*Major*—Ay, with a deep and filial love. His death makes an irretrievable gap in my heart. But he has fallen in his country's service!

*Sir Flimsey*—Your love has not appeared, my dear Major, with any great emphasis when you wronged him while he lived! I have sure proofs of your unfaithfulness.

*Hardy (aside)*—What enigma is this?

*Major*—What do you mean, Sir Flimsey?

*Sir Flimsey*—I mean, my dear Major, in plain terms, that you really concealed his uncle's second will—the codicil written just before his death, which was entirely in favour of Hardy.

*Hardy (aside)*—What providential chance is this?

*Major*—How dare you accuse me of such perfidy? If the poor boy had lived, I should have made all errors right.

*Sir Flimsey*—Oh, there was something wrong. Do you know, Major, that I can put my hands at once upon this codicil merely by writing out a chèque for a cipher or two?

*Major (aside)*—That treacherous attorney has betrayed me. This comes of my refusing him money. I care not. Well, Sir Flimsey, what do you propose?

*Sir Flimsey*—Well, my dear Major, I take the liberty of informing you that his estates will go into different channels if that codicil is published to the world, and the vast wealth will at once land in Chancery, before it comes out of which two or three generations may be swept to the dust-heap of forgetfulness.

*Major*—Would you name your purpose, Sir Flimsey?

*Sir Flimsey*—Certainly! In the first place, I am going to enter matrimonial bonds, and if you could spare a twenty thousand pounds, the little sum would be a most opportune dowry for my bride.

*Major*—But this is monstrous, Sir Flimsey!

*Sir Flimsey*—Do be a trifle more charitable. I think I deserve a little of the spoil, seeing that I have passed

three months at the seat of war in peril and in trouble. Besides a fifty thousand to invest in the Undermining Company, of which I am the head. It's in danger ! (*Aside*)—Since my return I learn the shares have fallen thirty shillings ! If Hardacre should hear of this, woe to my suit. I must be diplomatic !

*Major*—Do you observe that your servant's ears are open ? I think our business is unfit for any ear but our own.

*Sir Flimsey*—Oh, Skeems, you mean ! Why, he hasn't got the comprehension of a gnat, or the judgment of a jellyfish. Skeems ! give a stretch to those trapezing legs of yours. Exercise them, you rogue !

*Hardy (aside)*—Insulting knave ! I will obey to gain your thoughts and learn your intrigues. This is the will I suspected had existence. I must be cautious, or I may ruin all.

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to suggest, my dear Major, that we adjourn to the interior of your cottage, and negotiate our business over your best of wines.

*Major*—As you please, Sir Flimsey.

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to think it is rather sultry to-night.

*Major*—It's perfectly suffocating.

*Sir Flimsey*—I think it will be rain by yonder clouds.

*Hardy (aside)*—Yes, it will rain—possibly hot water for you both !

*Picture and Tableau.*

E N D O F A C T I V.

**A C T V.**

*SCENE I.—THE DRAWING-ROOM AT HARDACRE'S.*

(EIGHT DAYS ELAPSE.)

*Enter Lieutenant Flints (with his arm in a sling), and Helene.*

*Flints*—And so, Miss Helene, you were a little surprised at my sudden arrival?

*Helene*—Yes, we were a little surprised.

*Flints*—I hope, agreeably: my arrival was as abrupt as my departure; but I see you have been gathering herbs upon the moor.

*Helene*—Yes, I have gathered a few; I hope they will be beneficial to your scars, altho' the fashion is new, the cure is old.

*Flints*—How really mindful you are of my scars!—but how engrossed you are; I fear the herbs will be virtueless if you crush them so.

*Helene*—I shall gather more for you.

*Flints*—Pray, heed me not; but if the herb lacks a virtue, the giver's charm may have some healing balsam.

*Helene*—I am afraid Nature is the best nurse.

*Flints*—Ay, to these fleshly scars, but I have other scars—a scar here which she cannot heal.

*Helene*—This scar must be novel if Nature cannot heal it. I pray you name it.

*Flints*—It is a scar of unrequited love! I love; but fear my love may die even in the echo of its own voice. The lady spurned me once—made mirth of my sincerity—laughed to contempt my valour and my heroism, and, in the frenzy of my passion, I flew to those wild scenes of warfare where every sentiment and feeling are at once destroyed. In my dreams—when the cold moon looked down on my pillowless head upon the burning sands of Egypt—when the roar and thunder of artillery mocked the loveliness of an Eastern night—she was with me, like my better angel, infusing in my soul humanity and love, and inspiring me to deeds that blazon with these marks of valour! Need I use more this mask upon my speech? Perhaps the soldier of the porch—the monumental mummy is now more worthy of the name.

*Helene*—Forgive my cruel words; I do regret my folly and my faults—forgive me. You would spare me if you only knew what I have endured these weary months.

*Flints*—*Helene*, I forgive and forget all. I will not be so cruel as to re-open the past, but here again I dedicate my love to you. I am unaltered. Do you return my love?

*Helene*—I hate myself when I think on my faults.

*Flints*—All will be forgotten if you will but pay me with yourself. *Helene*, can you love me?

*Helene*—Why should I mask and amble behind my best feelings? What virtue like sincerity? Let me own my heart is yours, all, all!

*Flints*—That is my true Helene! Indeed, what virtue like sincerity! How many blighted lives are passed by untuning that one string? But, hush! the family are stirring; let us ramble in the garden, and I will tell you all the story of my adventurous campaign.

*Helene*—And how you won the Victoria Cross?

*Flints*—I will; altho' it jars a little on me to rehearse it—yet, what virtue like sincerity?

*Helene*—What, indeed? I hear a footstep; it is poor Florence; she masks a grief; there is a sad sequel which I will explain to you, but let me tell you that she has been deceived and abandoned by one she dearly loved!

*Flints*—Indeed, this touches me; let us withdraw—she comes!

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Mrs. Hardacre and Florence.*

*Mrs. Hard.*—What mean these sighs and tears, Florence? —one in your place should have excess of joy.

*Flo.*—Are you still resolute in this sacrifice?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Sacrifice? Tush! no more of this! Is not the match a good one? What is the glitter of youth compared to a man of means and maturity? Besides, are we not rising every day in the estimation of our friends since this match was spoken about?

*Flo.*—Has love no part to play in a life-happiness?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Love! What is love?—a visionary thing before and after marriage. Now, Flo., let me coax you a little. To be Lady Flints are you not envious? I only wish that I were in your lucky shoes. Just one more interview now, Flo.!

*Flo.*—Must I undergo another interview?

*Mrs. Hard.*—Yes, only one! You will come to love Sir Flimsey so much, Flo.!—he is so good and amiable. Well, he will be here to-day with some settling deeds, and your papa has seen that your rights are fully protected. Of course, we can have the marriage ceremonial at any time, and I have no doubt Sir Flimsey will have it in great magnificence—quite eclipsing the beggarly thing of the Bruce's.

*Flo.*—What means this haste? I beseech you to have a little forbearance.

*Mrs. Hard.*—It is only a little humour of Sir Flimsey's, and we surely could afford to grant it. Ha! a bell; I warrant it is Sir Flimsey just walked over from the Maxilby's and his lawyer, Mr. Twicks. Promise me to receive him with all due propriety.

*Flo.*—I will endeavour to receive him according to our relationships.

*Mrs. Hard.*—Ay, that is right and dutiful, Flo. The bell again; I'll go myself, for it is dear Sir Flimsey!

[*Exit.*]

*Flo.*—Eight days away, and not a sound or syllable from him. Oh, evil thought, have I been betrayed by an adventurer only? Oh, no! If he is false, then all are false. Courage, my heart, and cleave away your shadows! Ere this detested sacrifice be made, I will break through all filial authority, and leave the roof that has ever sheltered me. Yet, oh, vain thought, what can a green girl like me do in the dreadful battling

world? Be still, my heart, be still—the serpent comes!

*Enter Sir Flimsey Flints.*

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah, good morning, my dear Florence! I stand on no cold manner of salute.

*Flo.*—I think 'tis very cold.

*Sir Flimsey*—I think 'tis warm; and yet, the air is a trifle cold—a fault we owe to our variable climate.

*Flo.*—Do you mean the weather, Sir Flimsey?

*Sir Flimsey*—Yes, the weather, my dear Florence.

*Flo.*—I had no reference to the weather—I think 'tis warm for the season.

*Sir Flimsey*—Yes, of course; but see how dark it grows. I fear a thunderstorm is about to break.

*Flo.*—Is the storm far off?

*Sir Flimsey*—Be not alarmed; it is a goodly distance off.

*Flo.*—I think you are mistaken, for I can see its shadow creep upon the lawn.

*Sir Flimsey*—There is no danger, my dear Florence!—I will protect you. I know your nerves are a little unstrung by the result of my mission, but—

*Flo.*—I pray you do not stir my wounds again.

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah, yes! but, really, be not so sad. I came with the auspicious purpose of talking about the preliminaries of our union.

*Flo.*—Forbear, Sir Flimsey, if you are a man. I cannot quaff my sorrows at a draught.

*Sir Flimsey*—My dear Florence, think not my heart is void of sympathy. It, really, feels for you; and if I show it now by fluent lips, 'tis but a lack of words, and not an unfeeling heart.

*Flo.*—I shall believe you ; but I hear of some settling deeds you wish signed to-day.

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to affirm 'tis true. I will sacrifice my view to yours about the nuptial rite, if you will only sign a deed of marriage settlement to-day.

*Flo.*—Postpone this matter for a day or two, and if all things are honourable and true, I will prove equal to my promises.

*Sir Flimsey*—Precisely, my dear Florence ; but I do hope you will endorse the arrangements entered into to-day. I may say, I suppose, that I will not linger on formality, but get the deed prepared at once. I go for preparation and perusal. [Exit.]

*Flo.*—Detested hypocrite ! Oh, what a net of troubles I have woven around myself without one loophole of escape ! Must this sacrifice be made, and this false hand write away my life ? My brain is in a whirl ; and I know not whether I am in jest or earnest. Oh, shield me, love ! If you are false, come break my heart at once ! [Exit.]

*Enter Twicks and Sir Flimsey Flints.*

*Sir Flimsey*—Ah ! Mr. Twicks, we quite understand each other. You saw him put into restraint ? Wild lunatic that he is ! I venture to add—

*Twicks*—He is safely disposed of—muzzled, in fact ! You need not fear any annoyance on that score.

*Sir Flimsey*—You are the best of lawyers !—but is the deed in order ?

*Twicks*—Thoroughly !—and here your lady comes !

*Enter Mr. and Mrs. Hardacre, Flints, Helene, and Florence.*

*Hard.*—Ah, Mr. Twicks, glad to see you! We have a gracious purpose to enter upon, and we took advantage of your services.

*Twicks*—I am glad, my dear sir, to be of any service to you. I was just in the locality on a legal visit to a mutual friend, Major Maxilby. I'm told he has got bad news lately.

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to verify that remark. I was the bearer of the sad tidings——

*Twicks*—The deed is now in order! The lady's rights are well reserved; and, Sir Flimsey, will you kindly adhibit your name?

*Sir Flimsey*—Without delay! (*Signs deed.*) Now, my dear Florence, just affix your name, and you are Lady Flints in everything but the ceremony——!

*Twicks*—In this line, madam——!

*Flo.*—Forbear!—this haste has overpowered me. I must refuse to act this treason to my heart.

*Twicks*—In this line, madam!—the pen, please!—

*Enter Hardy.*

*Hardy*—Forbear to use that pen! Courage, gentle Florence! though tardy in my travel, and though mischance has befallen me by treachery, I am yet here to save you from an inglorious bond!

*Flo.*—I clung to my last hope!

*Hard.*—What means this outrage, sir? Who and what are you?

*Sir Flimsey*—And I venture to repeat the query!

*Hardy*—Will you dare to mock me?

*Mrs. Hard*.—Oh, he is an escaped lunatic—I'm sure of it!

*Hard*.—Not much less madman if this gentleman is to be believed!

*Mrs. Hard*.—I shall faint if this continue—I will!

*Hardy* (*to Sir Flimsey*)—Sir! if you are capable of a blush of shame be silent, or you will wring from me words I have determined not to use for the sake of him who claims your kinship and who is my dear friend!

*Sir Flimsey (aside)*—Is it possible I have been doubly snared and betrayed?

*Hard*.—Will you kindly explain what is the meaning of this scene?

*Hardy*—I will, in a few brief words. Eight days ago you had a footman, by name Skeems. He served you some months, and made an abrupt termination of his services little more than a week ago. I was that footman, and I played a lowly part to brighten my prospects. The stratagem being over, I stand by my true name of Alfred Hardy!

*Hard*.—God bless me! And are you my boy that so won my heart? Well! well! what next?

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to think this is a barefaced conspiracy only to interrupt our gracious purposes.

*Hardy*—Sir Flimsey Flints! you are a bold man; but you are bolder than I take you to be if you outface me when I ask you this question—Who hired the ruffians to attack me and put me under restraint in a lonely hut

upon a lonely heath? Are you guiltless of this treachery, when you came to understand my real name, my character, and my birthright?

*Sir Flimsey*.—Think you, sir, I am a baby to be affrighted by a boyish conjuration? I tell you again that you are an imposter, and that Hardy whom you are personating is dead! Lunatics, such as you, ought to be restrained! Your lack of proofs confirms you are an audacious imposter!

*Enter Captain Maxilby.*

*Capt. Max.*.—'Tis false!—this ring attests it! Examine it, and say it is the same you gave a lying, avaricious wretch, who duped your callous ear by assuming my friend Hardy's name! A bullet shattering his arm, and his wound being mortal, he charged me to pursue the rightful search. I assured the wretch that the search was vain, and he then died peacefully.

*Hard.*.—Am I awake or out of my senses?

*Capt. Max.*.—It sounds romantic and puzzling to ignorant ears. I will tell the sequel in a word. This ring was given by your daughter, Florence, to be conveyed to a fictitious lover at the seat of war. This was a stratagem—worthy the wit of a woman and true love—to rid her of a rejected rival's presence, and prove honesty or falsehood. It has proved the latter, and unmasked the guilty!

*Hard.*.—I feel a glimmer of the truth dawn on me.

*Capt. Max.*.—I learned the treachery that was ripening to a fatal issue, and I thank heaven for the little restored

energy which has enabled me to arrive so opportunely and verify vital facts.

*Hardy*—My best, my truest friend ! My thanks——

*Capt. Max.*—No thanks, my friend—a soldier's duty is a soldier's thanks !

*Sir Flimsey (aside)*—The game is lost—entirely lost ! Checkmated ! The wretch I gave the ring to has betrayed me !

*Enter a Messenger with letter.*

*Hard.*—Great heavens ! Shares of the Undermining Company fallen thirty shillings ! Merciful powers, I am a ruined man ! Viper and traitor, what have you to say to this ?

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to——

*Hard.*—The plagues of Egypt on your “ventures,” sir ! I 've been a rash confiding fool ! What 's this?—“ Warrants issued for the apprehension of directors ” ! This is the sum of my misfortunes !

*Hardy*—My good, kind master !—let me call you that once again—the sum of your best happiness is about to be made up from your misfortunes ! You have been deceived with hollow show and glitter, and have, naturally enough, under-estimated the plain and commonplace. In your hour of peril I will succour you, for now I inherit vast wealth.

*Hard.*—Did not your uncle disinherit you, my boy ?

*Hardy*—He did ; but treason turned upon itself, and traitors, false even to themselves, made me discover a codicil, a second will, entirely in my favour. (*To Flints*)—Sir ! your crafty hand was on the seal of my

inheritance after you spread a false report of my death.

I will not name him who was weak enough to be your accomplice. I can distinguish, however, between the crafty and the weak. You can go, as long as liberty is yours, with an unspotted name from here. I bear no malice—you can go!

*Sir Flimsey*—I venture to think your advice is very seasonable. Thank you! Good morning! Sorry, my dear Mrs. Hardacre, I cannot invite you to my Swiss villa, possibly next summer I may, if Fortune only is good enough to turn her wheel! Good morning! I venture to—

*Hardy* (*to Twicks*)—Friend of a feather, go!

[*Exeunt Twicks and Sir Flimsey.*]

*Enter Major Maxilby.*

*Major*—Ah, my boy, Alfred, I have learned all this hour, and I merit nothing but your contempt.

*Hardy*—Hush! my reverence is unbroken. My happiness would suffer, did I cherish one evil thought against so good a guardian! There is a difference between the crafty and the weak. Ah, Florence, some bright and providential star has been like a lamp to our loves through all the mazes of our stratagems!

*Flo*.—And now our star is in its full meridian!

*Hardy*—Have we your blessing?

*Hard*.—Our blessing be her dowry!

*Hardy*—'Tis all we ask. Ah, my friend, thrive you in Helene's love!

*Flints*—As buds between the kisses of a shower!

*Hardy*—And you, my faithful friend—is there a thaw about your Stoic heart?

*Capt. Max.*—I will confess there is a genial thaw! I never knew the value and the virtue of a woman's smile till I was laid, covered with wounds, upon a bed of pain. Then is woman, indeed, the physician!

*Hard.*—Sir, there is the subtle shadow of a smile upon your face, which I have dared to interpret. Tell me if in your travels you have heard anything of my poor lost daughter, Mabel?

*Capt. Max.*—I have a pleasant surprise for you—the last though not the least. Here is the maiden who watched over me with the deepest devotion, and which has blossomed in my heart the fairest feelings of love. Here she comes for forgiveness and a blessing!

*Enter Mabel.*

*Mabel*—Forgive me! for I have been ungrateful.

*Hard.*—My daughter, Mabel! Praise the heavens! You are right, my boy; the sum of my happiness is only beginning—all old values seem to be doubling on me, and the restoration of my daughter mends a breach in this old heart, beside which, all monetary misfortune seems like a little rift. What say you, wife?

*Mrs. Hard.*—I am subdued; and though the leaven of our lives comes in the evening, it may still serve to temper the twilight shadows as they fall.

*Capt. Max.*—I am afraid I only restore your daughter to ask her again. Have we your blessing also?

*Hard.*—You rifle my heart of its best blossoms; but you also crown my life with its best fruits; for what joy

transcends the giving of a daughter into the keeping of a brave and honourable man? Our best blessing go with your hearts; and this counsel of an old man who has long weathered the world—always remember (although the taste of its truth I begin only to relish fully now)—that the purest joy is not to be found in worshipping the idols of place and pride, but in being true at the calm altars of your honourable and simple selves!

*Hardy*.—One truth is sure—the right still ever strives  
To weave the gold threads with our chequered  
lives;

Though lost awhile, the thread in troubled toils,

*Flo*.—At last comes up thro' "Stratagems and Spoils"!

*Curtain falls.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Hardacre, Major Maxilby, Captain Maxilby  
and Mabel, Flints and Helene.*

*Florence and Hardy.*

END OF ACT V.





I M O L E N E.

G

# **Imolene:**

**A Tragedy in Four Acts.**

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## **PERSONS IN THE PLAY.**

**THE DUKE OF SAXONY,** Usurping the Throne.

**THE COUNT AGNASTUS,** Kinsman to the Duke.

**ITHARO,** . . . . . A Soldier—friend to the Count.

**AZAGO,** . . . . . {A Hunchback—favourite of the  
Duke.

**FRIEDMAN,** } . . . . . Conspirators.  
**JACQUIN,** }

**IMOLENE,** . . . . . {Daughter of Otto, a previous  
Duke—enslaved by the Usurper.

**FIDELE,** . . . . . Beloved by Itharo.

**HERMAN,** . . . . . A Friar.

Maidens, Attendants, Guards, &c.

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**SCENE—Saxony during the Middle Ages.**

# IMOLENE.

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## ACT I.

*SCENE I.—A GROVE BY MOONLIGHT.*

(DUKE'S PALACE IN THE DISTANCE.)

*Festivities going on.*

[*Music.*]

NIGHT.

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*Enter Fidele and Maidens.*

*Fid.*—Hail, sister, hail! all health and happiness—  
A truce to toil upon this happy night!

*1st Maid.*—The same to dear Fidele.

*Fid.*—To-night we crown the harvest of the vine,  
And pay devotion to the rosy god!

*1st Maid.*—Comest thou from the carnival?

*Fid.*—I do.

I have been tripping in the minuet,  
And feel my spirits droop.

*1st Maid.*—A cup of sherbet to our dear Fidele.

*Fid.*—Thanks, sister, thanks!—I never worship more.  
But though I am a stranger to the cup,  
Spread out full flagons to the revellers.  
We need not fasten merry spirits down,  
If they find favour in their loyalty.  
How sweetly mellow is the music here!

*1st Maid.*—Soft music stirs my spirit to its depths.

*Fid.*—And mine too,

And when I hear those soft and speaking strains  
My spirit touches on a pensive key,  
And breathes of things which I can never see  
In all the round of life: but who says now  
To fool a little in the masquerade?

*1st Maid.*—Beneath our masks we doubly hide ourselves.

*Fid.*—What mean'st thou, sister?

*1st Maid.*—My spirit chafes against captivity,  
And dreams of liberty.

*Fid.*—Hush! At that great altar lay thy hope,

But let thy vows be voiceless!

, Now, to the masquerade! Come, sisters, come!

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Imolene (reading a scroll).*

*Imo.*—“Be true, and fear not; suffer like a saint: thou art  
Beneath thy instincts, yet beyond thy hopes.”  
Mysterious voices of astrology!—  
That strangely wind my fate!—what can ye mean?  
Already do the words unload my life  
And strike a newer hope. Is’t possible  
That this detested bondage may but be  
The shadow of the arch, through which I pass,  
To unseen greatness?

*Enter Agnastus.*

*Agn.*—Imolene!

*Imo.*—My lord!

*Agn.*—The maskers miss thee in the masquerade.

*Imo.*—My lord, I pray you pardon me,  
This is my masque, this hour of liberty—  
A masque in which I counterfeit the free,  
And character the mistress of myself:  
The free can fool with freedom—such as I  
Can only ape that which I never know.

*Agn.*—Heaven carve a better fate to Imolene!  
Thou hast been thinking—figured in thy face  
Are traces of deep thought.

*Imo.*—My lord, I will be true.  
I have been juggling with astrologers,  
And by some operations of the stars  
They flatter me.

*Agn.*—Imolene! I read thy spirit.  
I know thou hast an unread leaf of life,  
Folded to all save self. Thou wear'st a mask,  
And thou dost only counterfeit thyself;  
But like a jewel buried in the ore,  
Thy soul shines through. I watch thy daily toil,  
And thou dost add to it a dignity,  
Which it takes from thee. Speak I not true?

*Imo.*—My lord,  
I own my hopes will overleap themselves—  
Outpacing these environs of my life,  
In which I am a cipher—knowing not  
My dawn of life, and where it will lead me.  
But when my spirit doth unfold itself,  
And thirsts to breathe the blyther airs of life—  
Airs that are thick with perfumes of the past,  
Or with the breathings of the veiled future—

I can be mistress, and chastise me back  
To bounds that level with my state.

*Agn.*—Canst thou look backward,  
And fix thy recollection on the time  
When it began? Wakes it in some blurred dawn,  
Of which thy life is but an afterglow?

*Imo.*—My lord, I have  
Some shadowy reflexes in my mind  
Of palace, state, and royal equipage;  
But all are dipped so deep in shadowland,  
As seem the driftings of a dream.

*Agn.*—Thou may'st feel the spirit of the past,  
Or catch in prelude all the graces of  
Thy fortune yet unblown by ripening time;  
For Fortune limps behind thy excellence,  
As greatly as the Orient rose outblooms  
The slime it grows in.

*Imo.*—Thou dost outdo my simple self.

*Agn.*—Nay, Imolene.  
Though Fortune leapt her golden steps at once,  
She still would halt, and thou wouldest make her  
poor;  
Yet, what thou art transcends what thou mightst be,  
If Fate and circumstance had been auspicious;  
For, in the smile of Fortune, often gems  
Lose their own lustre, and are drifted down  
To pale obscurity—as see myself  
(I speak of only the effects of place).  
Fortune and honour and the arts of life

Shoot o'er my nature like ill-yoked steeds:  
Pampered with plenty, I have lost my spur,  
And cannot raise, chastise, and whip to use  
My flowing spirit, having no ambition.  
If I am rich, I 'm poor, as riches oft  
Bring but a poor economy of soul ;  
And though I hold the golden cup, it is  
The cup that surfeits, yet the cup that starves.  
Yet higher purpose and a fixed aim  
Lie in me like a flint ready to flash,  
When it strikes on the touchstone of all hearts.  
Canst thou perceive the touchstone, Imolene ?

*Imo.*—I am no sluggard in a guess.

The shadows of thy youth point now to noon ;  
And man is only but a moiety  
Without the leaven of all natures—love !  
Heaven mate thee well, my lord !

*Agn.*—Thou dost interpret aptly, Imolene.

All great effects are woven on the loom  
Of Silence ; and this passion that I breathe  
Is but the blossom of a buried love  
That figures now the tree. In silence I have pitied ;  
And pity, blooming to a gladder growth,  
At length o'ermasters me. Could'st thou love me ?  
Pass from thy view all difference—degree,  
And let thy heart, with its immediate voice,  
Speak from the soul of self.

*Imo.*—Love thee, my lord ?—this is beyond my voice,  
But not beyond my soul's imaginings.

*Ag'n.*—Be thou my bride, my Imolene !

And all my fortune I will blow like chaff  
To share the state that nurtures such a flower.

*Imo.*—Thy bride ? Thy wife ? My lord,  
Thou dost o'erload me. I scarce do know thee,  
Scarcely know myself, but by that note  
Which Nature strikes upon an under key.  
Art thou not rash, impulsive, unadvised ?  
For I can claim not that associate grace,  
With which to hope to hold thy heart in place,  
When it meets brighter excellence. My lord,  
I am a dowerless girl, less than I like  
To call myself ; now honoured more than I  
Have any challenge to ; artless in art,  
Unschooled in all ; and nothing in my name.  
Bethink, my lord,  
The granite's growth is safe in every wind,  
But filagrees of fancy soon must fall.

*Ag'n.*—Be thou my bride, and I will challenge Fate !

Ah, Imolene ! this sloth of soul remove,  
And raise a nature dragging in the dust,  
To those high regions where our fancies soar,  
And lifts us with them. Be mine, my Imolene !  
And I will dare to lift the iron heel  
That lies upon the soul of Saxony.

*Imo.*—I feel my soul is shining with a light  
That outshines words ! Would'st fight for Freedom ?  
At that high altar I have laid my love,  
And if thou worshippest there, our hearts are one !  
Take me, my lord, my soul shall be thy spur,

The valour of my bosom I will strike  
Into thine own ; and if thou 'rt conquered,  
Make thou this heart thy sheathe, that we may die  
Together in a blow for Liberty !  
And dying for our freedom is but jest.  
But if thou conquerest, let my lord possess  
The unbroached vessel of my love.

*Agn.*—Thou dost inspire me with such faith :  
Thy heart is not of simple stuff.

*Imo.*—I may forget my valour oft,  
But not my love, as hearts in happiness  
Forget all general griefs ; but thou wilt find  
Thou 'lt have to lesson me in life, my lord.

*Agn.*—Smile but the Fates upon our lives,  
And Love will be the alchemist in all—  
Turning the littles of a lowly life  
Into the highest and the holiest !  
When hearts are one, why linger or prorogue  
The rite that makes our love the holiest ?

*Imo.*—What means, my lord ?

*Agn.*—Hard by there is a marble grotto ;  
'Tis hewn by angel artists, and enshrined  
By Love itself, in starry solitude,  
There—as the bright ambassadress of night  
Shines like a sybil to attest the deed—  
A friar waiteth to attach our hearts  
In every symbol of our holy church.

*Imo.*—Thy wife to-night ? My lord, is 't not  
Too like a day when April masks a storm—  
Too hasty and abrupt to be substantial ?

Bethink, my lord, and if our hearts mean love,  
 I 'll love thee by the pittance of a day,  
 Till both our hearts are knit by soft degree.

*Agn.*—Hearts schooled like ours climb all the steps at once;  
 Such pacing for Love's puppets, not for souls  
 Who have their treasures laid  
 In the exchequer of a sumless love :  
 When ours—why now prorogue possession ?  
 Jointress of my life !  
 The friar waits us in the grotto now.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter Fidele and Itharo.*

*Fid.*—Oh, shame, Itharo ! Shame !  
 Hast thou exchanged thy dignity and pride,  
 And sold so cheaply all the grace of man,  
 For this inglorious gait ?

*Ith.*—We have some licence to our throats to-night,  
 For this night is, of all nights of the year,  
 The most auspicious !

*Fid.*—The most auspicious made the most depraved !  
 For here thou art the fashion of a fool,  
 Unfit to dance, and lurching like a ship—  
 The laughing stock of all !

*Ith.*—Patience, dear Fidele.

*Fid.*—Dost thou remember on thy reputation ?  
 Already whispers are on active wing,  
 And sure will reach the Duke. What is thy life ?  
 'Tis only precious by thy reputation,  
 And only noble by thy purposes.

*Ith.*—My fair Fidele, I will repair the breach  
If I am left a little to the air.

Jacquin, good boy, is my right trusty deputy.

*Fid.*—Thy deputy in duty? Oh, shame, Itharo!  
To leave a hot-head in these troublous times  
At such a post. Itharo; I will go  
And see thy watch is capably set;  
For much I fear the very staunchest friend  
At such a post as duty. [Exit.]

*Ith.*—My true Fidele!  
She is the very angel of my life.  
But where the devil should Agnastus be?  
I left him fooling in the carnival.  
Ha! Azago! I'll counterfeit a trifle.

*Enter Asago.*

*Aza.*—Good greeting to Itharo!

*Ith.*—The same to my immortal friend, Azago!  
How opportune our meeting!—here I am  
Stabbed, good Azago, stabbed, and much I fear  
My wound will bleed to death. Help! help!  
An ambulance! an ambulance!

*Aza.*—Sayst thou, Itharo?  
Alas! where art thou stabbed?

*Ith.*—Stabbed in the conscience by a woman's tongue!  
A woman's wisdom is as sharp as steel.  
Now, master crook, thou shadow of a man!  
Go, prate the news that I am stabbed to death,  
Thou imp, thou shrivelled piece of nature!  
The devil made thee surely in a dream,

And put a rainbow on thy arched back,  
To mark his own ! I 'll practice on thy points—  
There's one, two, three, and the fourth is in thee !  
'Tis well I missed ; but take and starve thy soul  
In that vile botch of nature !

*Aza.*—To jest at nature is to jest at heaven.

*Ith.*—I never jest at heaven,  
Only the devil still deserves his due !

*Aza.*—Thou art a hero in thy use of words.

*Ith.*—Well, come Azago, let's be loyal friends,  
It augurs ill to make a breach to-night.  
What gossip goes the round ?

*Aza.*—I do not court thy friendship when 'tis spleen.

*Ith.*—Why, right, Azago, I have been severe ;  
But come, now, tell us how the court flies buzz,  
And all the little items thou hast garnered ?  
Thou art the very reaper of reports..

*Aza.*—Thou mak'st amends, Itharo.

(*Aside*—I 'll nurse my hate to sweeten my revenge.)  
Well, good Itharo, dost thou see the ranks  
Of Dresden aping ? The foot looks to the top,  
And now the top looks to the very foot.

*Ith.*—I am a member of some rank, methinks,  
And I look neither to the high or low ;  
But I know where I'm going to.

*Aza.*—Perhaps abroad on active service ?

*Ith.*—Yes, Azago, thou art right : a long way off ;  
I have come down a little in the scale,  
For I am to be a gentleman-in-waiting.

*Aza.*—To whom, Itharo ?

*Ith.*—I have some scruple to divulge the news.

*Aza.*—I will not prate, upon my loyal oath.

*Ith.*—Well, to his Serene—

*Aza.*—Yes, royalty, I see,

*Ith.*—And Sable Highness—

*Aza.*—Some Morocco Prince—

*Ith.*—The Devil !

Now prate the news, thou chamberer,

Thou courtier, needle-threader, on thou fly !

Thou backstair gossip and thou bag of lies—

Scatter thy scandal now !

*Aza.*—If so I'd only imitate thy friend

The noble Count, who seems not yet above

A little sweet flirtation with a slave !

*Ith.*—Beguile thy mother with this full-blown lie.

*Aza.*—Call me a liar on an open proof!

Glance to the grotto thro' the myrtle leaves ;

See dusky figures, posing statuesque,

In all the forms of love ?

*Ith.*—By all the saints, 'tis he—a complete heart—

A citadel of high and valiant parts,

Dribbling with the fooleries of love !

What ho ! good Count !

A maiden mouse is nibbling at thy heart.

I'll plant the flag of freedom in my heart,

To warn all maiden vessels after this.

Give me my wine, I care not for the chicks ;

Let's have a cup to cure this breach of ours,

And I will sing our little strife away.

**Song.**

“ Fill full a cup of ruby wine,  
 And drink to Bacchus, rosy boy !  
 He is the monarch of the vine,  
 And his glad charms never cloy.

“ He thaws the winter of our life,  
 And drowns our cares in balm divine ;  
 So fill full cups and sink our strife  
 In an immortal bowl of wine.

“ Come, fill the foaming flagons full,  
 And drink to Venus sister charm ;  
 And let the sprightly goddess rule,  
 And keep our best emotions warm.

“ Our merry hearts like ivy twine  
 With love’s delicious witchery ;  
 So fill full cups, and pledge in wine  
 Our lives, our loves, our loyalty ! ”

*Aza*.—Thou hast some genius in thy throat, Itharo.

*Ith*.—True, Azago, true !

The subtle spirit of this exercise      (*Drinking*).  
 Is singling me from out the common heap.  
 But would our wills were stronger than our tastes !  
 For I have tasted much against my will.  
 The morning after a convivial night,  
 I build the fabric of a good resolve ;  
 But evening, like a syren sweet in smiles,  
 Attacks the little citadel—and then  
 The purpose falters, and the good resolve  
 Is but an air-built vision.

*Aza.*—Thou should'st be frugal and more temperate.

*Ith.*—What ! lose my pleasures for frugality ?

To change my nature for a niggard spirit—  
To scrape and count and bare my bones of flesh,  
In owning such a vassalage to gold ?  
Gold for the gamester, not for generous hearts,  
Gold for the chaff, and not for sterling seed :  
I 'll have one cup and purge my fancy.  
I 'll join thee in the Carnival ;  
Mark thou my mask, Azago.

[*Exit.*]

*Aza.*—What fools are men when they unmask themselves !

Oh, how I hate the upright form of man !  
I, that am botched by nature of all grace—  
In whom a virtue can produce no fruit ;  
Or, if a fruit, a poison it would seem—  
So loveless is the mould in which it grows—  
Will dare to gain my levels by my craft.  
Great goddess Nature, what a balance thine !  
To poise my scales so niggardly with grace ;  
But weigh me well with craft : I hate these times,  
And all the antic aping of the hour.  
I have my foes : Agnastus is the chief :  
He calls me dog, and spurns me from the palace.  
I 'll have to reckon with his Countship soon.  
Ha ! my friend ; a word, I prithee.

*Enter a Conspirator.*

I see that thou dost hate these masquerades,  
And, with myself, catch at the undertones—  
In which the current's of men's souls are seen—  
By which we gain the very keys of honour.

Art thou so shallow and conceitless friend,  
As bear a blow and not retaliate ?  
And lose a chance—a most auspicious chance—  
To gain thee vengeance on our common foe—  
That foe thou know'st is Agnastus.

*Con.*—I owe the proud patrician such a hate  
That I would strike at shadows for revenge.

*Aza.*—'Tis well, I find thy soul is apt and cute ;  
Then thou must know he is my bitter foe—  
A rival too in the affairs of love,  
If I will speak—I cannot woo the maid,  
As thou wilt guess, by any tender art ;  
So for my body's botch I mean to rob,  
By every means, Agnastus of his grace,  
So that the maid may cast her eye on me.

*Con.*—What is thy course ?

*Aza.*—I mean to fire a feud, and wake revolt,  
If thou art true and trusty in my plans :  
The Duke is veiled in hate, and trifles would  
Arouse the heat of his potential will  
To crush our foe.

*Con.*—Hast thou some surety of success ?

*Aza.*—We will be sure, and speedy will he be—  
The people's idol and the people's pride—  
Transformed by this, our alchemy of hate,  
Into a hated devil.

*Con.*—I fear his splendid reputation would  
Disarm the chastisement, that follows on  
The common erring !

*Aza.*—The people are impulsive in hate, in love ;  
Ebb, like the tide, from highest seamark then,  
To lowest now : as lusty in their hate  
As in their love ; and this abuse of law—  
Which grinds us almost with a martial hand—  
Will be an apt forfeiture of their loves.  
Art thou agreed ?

*Con.*—Let me review it for a trifling time,  
And sound my friends.

*Aza.*—Time is the greatest factor in the plot,  
It must be ripe, within the very hour,  
I 'll meet you ere an hour is gone.

[*Exit Conspirator.*]

*Aza.*—I have a fool, with all my imperfections,  
Plays vassal to my will : I will mature my plot,  
And spur the motives of my federal friends.  
My noble Count beware ; the slumbering dog  
Is now to show his teeth ! [Exit.]

*Enter Friar Herman, Imolene, and Agnastus.*

*Agn.*—Thy blessing, Friar, on this holy rite.

*Friar.*—Benedicite !

And may the Author of your earthly love  
Transplant your blossom into paradise,  
When it winds round the circuit of your years !

*Agn.*—Amen, good Friar, to thy holy words ;  
And if this sweet encounter of our hearts  
Be but the prelude of our riper joys,  
Then are we armed against the shafts of fate.

*Imo.*—Amen, my lord, I echo to thy words ;  
 For I do feel so blissful in my state  
 That all the gloss and excellence of life  
 Seem curded in this hour.

*Friar*—To grace occasion you must part awhile.

*Agn.*—I had forgot, good Friar, on that bond :  
 Dear love, we part : one inauspicious hour  
 Be exile from my heart.

*Imo.*—Wilt thou begone ? Oh, may the hour have wings,  
 For it will pass as days to the exile—  
 The longest minutes in the calendar.

*Agn.*—Our parting now is to deceive report,  
 One passing hour : the revels are not o'er—  
 Hark to the music ! (Music.)

*Imo.*—Without thy presence all the music jars ;  
 Oh, I will languish till thou dost return,  
 And ache with gazing in expectancy.

*Agn.*—Thy grief is mine ; but look, o'er Cynthia's brow,  
 A cloud is passing like this shade on love.  
 My life, adieu !

To thee, good Friar, I commit my wife. [Exit.]

*Friar*—I will be trusty of my beauteous charge.

*Imo.*—And is he gone ? Oh, how mine ears rebel—  
 To hear his footfalls dying on the air !  
 Good Friar, let me kneel. (She kneels.)  
 I will invoke the charter of the gods  
 To make my love no variable thing—  
 No need to flutter by the winds of fate,  
 But fixed and unchanging as themselves !

*Friar*—Have faith, good daughter, on thy lord's return.

*Imo.*—I will, good Friar ; yet, oh stars, shine bright !

And, oh ye spirits that control our lives,  
Bend through the vesper veil, and guard my lord  
From all the shots of accident and chance.  
And if mischance should fall upon his path,  
Oh, by some blessed oracle, suspend  
The heavier hand of fate !

[*Exeunt.*]

*Re-enter Azago, Friedman, and Conspirators.*

*Aza.*—I see that all are loyal to my plot :  
Are all agreed Agnastus is our foe ?

*Fried.*—Firmly agreed, Azago.

*Aza.*—So is he mine—a rival and a foe,  
Which I have vouch'd to this trusty friend.  
List to my plan.  
Agnastus comes upon this path to-night—  
This way leads to the postern of the palace ;  
He will be single, and the place is apt  
To batter out his life ; and to be true  
And trusty to such loyal friends as you,  
I may avouch the fact, that royal eyes  
Will look on calmly if we do succeed ;  
By hints and nods and other soul effects  
(Which I interpret well against the Count)  
I have been gathering at the royal thoughts.  
Plant yourselves in places ; 'tis a bold exploit,  
But in these times of anarchy and strife—  
And men are on the tiptoe for revolt—  
The citizens will stir, and bloody feuds  
Convulse the town. Contrive to fire the guns,

And ring the vespers to awake the watch,  
 While, in the dire disorder of the hour,  
 What prizes may not fall to those who strike ?  
 To your places now, and wait !

*[Exeunt Conspirators.]*

*Aza.*—Thus I have fools to feed my enterprises.  
 Their aim is vengeance only—simple fools !  
 Mine is revenge, ambition, love, and power ;  
 And while they sow for visionary fruits,  
 I mean to reap the harvest of the chance !  
 I know the very pivot and the prop  
 On which men's fortunes turn, which I will use.  
 This breach of law will confiscate his lands,  
 And if he dies I gain a moiety.  
 If he escapes, I have a knife with me  
 To give myself a voluntary thrust  
 And colour up his guilt. The plot is ripe.  
 Ha ! his form appears ; my stars protect me  
 In this bold exploit !                           *[Exit.]*

*(Sounds of a scuffle and a great noise.)*

*Enter Itharo.*

*Ith.*—I have escaped, thanks to my clearing senses ;  
 If but this muddy mixture on my brain  
 Would melt, and bring me back unto myself,  
 My sword against them all !

*Enter Agnastus.*

*Agn.*—Bloodthirsty villains !  
 Itharo, art thou scratched ?

*Ith.*—My skin, I see, is whole as yet.

*Agn.*—I fear that I'm undone when I review.

Hark to the bells that wake the citizens

To arms.

(*Bells ring.*)

*Ith.*—An evil chance when the revolt was dead,

Its ashes now are stirred.

*Agn.*—Stirred by that slave Azago,

He came between me and a well-aimed thrust,

And much I fear I slew him. It is enough,

The Duke will now unmuzzle all his spite—

Too much for me if I unsheathe my sword.

Let us away, Itharo!—I misgive,

And feel I am the very fool of Fate.

*Ith.*—What moves my lord so deeply?

*Agn.*—That which is its richest pride,

And yet its present pain. Let us away!

And I will open wide my heart to thee.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter Citizens and Azago (wounded).*

*Aza.*—Oh, help, good citizens—I die!

*1st Cit.*—Who gave this fatal blow?

*Aza.*—The Count Agnastus—I die!

*1st Cit.*—Agnastus?

Our only hope, a brawler of this kind?

*2nd Cit.*—Why waste your breath upon a wasp like this?

The Count has done a service to the State.

*1st Cit.*—Peace, sirrah, peace!

Is this botched body fit for royal sport?

He is a man bearing the seal of heaven,

And cries for Justice to awake herself  
Upon the level of humanity !  
We vow our vengeance on Agnastus !  
*All*—Vengeance on Agnastus !

*Tableau.*

END OF ACT I.



**A C T II.**

*SCENE I.—WOODS IN THE ENVIRONS.*

MORNING.

---

*Enter Agnastus and Itharo.*

*Agn.*—Thus far we have escaped : the riot feeds,  
And even the quiet of these woods resounds  
With echoes of the fray.

*Ith.*—I fear the citizens are on the steps.

*Agn.*—I care not—I will defy the Duke !

Would that these masking carnivals were dead,  
And men would fool with fair and open face—  
To single friend from foe.

*Ith.*—They have some policy—to mask the wrongs  
That lie upon the Saxon heart.

*Agn.*—True, Itharo ! Saxony is undone ;  
And Right and Justice fester in their graves,  
While Tyranny, red-handed at her throat,  
Strikes like a thief the citadel of life  
At the least stirring of her freer pulse.  
But list, Itharo ! let me ope my heart—  
Thou knowest the Duke against me veils a spite,  
Which on a chance will blazon ! Itharo !  
As boys at college, or as men at home,  
We have been friends—each loyal and true.  
Itharo, I am doubly undone !

*Ith.*—What do you mean, my lord?

*Agn.*—Less than an hour, I kissed the dews of joy

From the white forehead of my love—my wife!

'Tis true, Itharo, Imolene is mine—

A higher spirit never shone behind

A mortal mask!—and men will brand her slave!

Forgive me, shadow of thy spirit, now—

Thy coronet is love! I have uplifted her

Into the region that her spirit walks,

And borne mine own with hers. Just as my hopes

So highly rose, cohered, and struck one key,

This dark mischance to blight—Ah! didst thou  
know

How it makes ruins of my heart, and fires

My soul to frenzy, and to desperate deeds—

Say, how can I—a stabber—an assassin—

Colleague with love while blood is on my soul?

*Ith.*—My lord! look on it with a calmer eye.

*Agn.*—All things are blurred to me;

And while the spirit of our lives is low,

What better time to die? Can I outlive

This broken image of a love-built dream,

And see misfortune drink the grace of life,

To leave me with the lees? [Draws a dagger.]

*Ith.*—Hold, my lord!—have better hopes!

Thy royal kinsman surely will award

Thee fairest justice.

*Agn.*—Justice from kinsmen?—ask it of the wolf!

Our friends are then the worst of foes, and love,

Limping at best, soon sickens at a chance,

And the poor scales of justice are o'erthrown  
When friends are in the balance!

*Ith.*—Whether would'st thou go?

*Agn.*—One place—that shrines my heart!

I go to kiss farewell; but promise me,  
If fate is dark, and we should never meet,  
(As it is in some likelihood, for who  
Knows the next tribute to the tax of blood),  
Thou will be steward of my whole estate,  
And see my rights continue with my wife,  
Who now is jointress by the Saxon law.

*Ith.*—My lord, I will requite thy trust!

*Agn.*—Farewell, Itharo! I go to meet, and part,  
And bury joy in grief! Farewell!

*Ith.*—Farewell, my lord!

[*Exeunt.*

And hope to both!

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## SCENE II.—DUKE'S PALACE.

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*Enter Duke.*

*Duke*—The carnival, the breeder of revolt—

Turning the brightest to the saddest side—  
Is nearly o'er, and no mischance—a miracle!  
I have my finger on the keys of men,  
And, while they hear such pipings of the hour,  
Their souls are lulled as in a lullaby;  
And I can build the granite of my power.

*Enter an Attendant.*

*Att.*—Your royal Grace,

The city is again in a revolt,

And it is feared Azago has been slain !

*Duke*—What say'st thou, villain ?

Azago slain ?—the city in a riot ?

*Att.*—'Tis true, your royal Grace.

*Duke*—Who stirred the tumult ?

*Att.*—'Tis said, and ratified by all,

That Count Agnastus, in a heat of wine,

First drew and slew Azago.

*Duke*—Azago slain, and by that wayward boy ?

(*Aside*) This had been well had it been opposite.

If thou hast erred a syllable in this,

Thy coward bones will redder on the wheel !

This is a debt we owe the carnival.

Now it is doomed ! Is the assassin in arrest ?

*Att.*—The citizens are on his steps.

*Duke*—Let him not escape at peril of your lives.

(*Aside*) I now can deal with this dare-devil well.

*Att.*—The populace, still smouldering in revolt,

Is heated for revenge, and fatal feuds

Are rife : And factions take to sides, of which

The weakest is with Count Agnastus. We wait

For orders to arrest the riot

By firing on the populace !

*Duke*—Take thou this signet to the Governor—

(*Giving ring*) Tell him to use the symbol of our power :

If peace is not immediately restored,

I mean to answer by the brazen throats

That speak so surely from the citadel.

To the Governor and the General go !

*Att.*—I will obey, your royal Grace.

[*Exit.*]

*Duke*—Disasters thicken ; this fooling festival

Stirs still the ashes of rebellion ;

This feud has in it some redeeming grace—

I've gloated for some plea—some chartering chance,

To crush that proud, ambitious boy, Agnastus.

He winds himself about the people's love,

And when I passed within my Capital,

I heard his name linked with audacious hope,

And mine with but the service of the lip :

He calls me tyrant, and defies my power,

And taxes my exchequer with his pride ;

I have the will, and now my charter comes

To cast the caitiff to captivity !

*Enter Itharo.*

How now, Itharo ?

Art thou partner in this brawl ?

*Ith.*—Not so, my liege.

I only came as duty doth direct,

And qualify report.

*Duke*—When did this riot stir ?

*Ith.*—I think upon the balance of the night.

*Duke*—Is not your watch about that hour ?

*Ith.*—It is, your royal Grace.

*Duke*—Wert thou an aper at the carnival ?

*Ith.*—I did some fooling, I confess, your Grace.

*Duke*—Within your watch ?

*Ith.*—Upon its borders, I take leave to say.

*Duke*—And was a soldier, gadding like a girl—

Masking and aping while his watch was set ?  
And though I had opinion formed of thee,  
Such misdemeanour merits my rebuke.

*Ith.*—I do confess I was abroad, your Grace ;  
But if my duty—

*Duke*—Peace, Itharo, peace !

Thy duty's at thy post. Art thou a soldier,  
Or but a whey-face scholar in thy trade ?  
As not to know, a soldier's duty is  
Drifted and centred at one point—his post—  
Where death and devils only interfere  
To shake but to support. 'Tis treasonable :  
Unfix thy sword ; surrender it to me,  
And leave our service with disgrace.

*Ith.*—Here is my sword ! (*Surrenders his sword.*)  
Is this the laurel for that valiant deed  
I gained applause from voices of the State ?  
Did I not gird this sword and braved the foe  
When wild revolt did batter at thy palace ?  
And by a treason to myself did save  
Thy royal life ?

*Duke*—Thy fault is rank, and must be punished so :  
Ourself is guardian of our dignity.  
My will is named : our service soon would fall  
Into the very rags of a repute,  
If we poise men to places of high post—  
High o'er their fellows, to the top of trust—  
And they must level with the least.

---

*Ith.*—Occasions have been when the greatest men  
Have been the least ! Your Grace, I once more put  
My service 'gainst this folly of an hour,  
And ask a pardon for the first of faults.

*Duke*—First faults are worst ;  
They are the firstlings of a fruitful crop.  
'Tis sad to see men by a stupid stroke  
Furl down their future, and undo themselves.  
From lower levels you may rise again,  
With better sense of dignity and duty  
When thou dost reach the top. Itharo,  
I'll put thee in the crucible !

*Ith.*—My liege, I thank you !                            [Exeunt.]

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*SCENE III.—IMOLENE'S CHAMBER.*

IN THE BACKGROUND, DAWN UPON THE MOUNTAINS.

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*Enter Imolene and Friar.*

*Imo.*—Good Friar, thou hast made me very happy,  
And filled my heart with such a sum of joy  
As makes me feel that I am fully free.  
My lord is still a truant. Is the hour  
Yet wasted ? for oh ! methinks 'tis slow.

*Friar*—The little hour, fair daughter, is not spent.

*Imo.*—A little hour, good Friar ?

It is an age to every playful pulse.

*Friar*—The Count has scruples to conceal your loves,  
 And so he mingled with the carnival :  
 And thou dost know hot heads do ever see  
 Its final fooling.

*Imo.*—Heaven shield my lord !  
 This is our chamber, this my bridal bed ;  
 And am I still a maid and yet a wife ?

*Friar*—By every holy rite, good daughter !

*Imo.*—Good Friar, dost thou exact thy ancient tribute ?  
 One kiss is yet thy tributary tax,  
 For thou dost tie the modest strings of love,  
 To let fond hearts encounter their delights  
 With fullest freedom and without restraint.  
 Think'st thou we shall be happy ?

*Friar*—Alas ! good daughter, I can make none happy.  
 I only join the hands—the hearts must be  
 Knit by diviner stuff !

*Imo.*—But dost thou think our sun of happiness  
 Will ever darken by that rude eclipse  
 Which knowing prophets say attends true love ?

*Friar*—As yon soft dawn is as the rose of gloom,  
 So shadows sharpen out thy lines of love.

*Imo.*—And dost thou think two hearts are mated well ?

*Friar*—If ever Heaven composed two souls to graft,  
 I have this night incorporated them.

*Imo.*—Good Friar,  
 Wilt thou exact thy tributary toll ?      (*Kisses him.*)

*Friar*—Oh, daughter !  
 This is against the spirit of our Church.

*Imo.*—And is't against the spirit of thy taste ?

*Friar*—'Tis noted as a sin to kiss a wife !

*Imo*.—But I kissed thee, good, honest Friar ;  
And is thy Church disloyal to thy sense ?  
But tell me, Friar, all the course of love.

*Friar*—From one who has run its pure course—  
Allowed us lately by a holy charter—  
I say, good daughter,—  
Keep on thy love the bloom of novelty,  
And ripen by a season of restraint :  
Do so,  
And youth will give a legacy to age  
Of kindly virtues and of kindly vigour.

*Imo*.—But could we fall into a sin, good Friar,  
If we abandon all our souls to love ?  
Have no ambition but to live for love ;  
No aspiration but to die for love ?

*Friar*—Thou mayst forget the prime source of thy love,  
From which thy love is only tributary !

*Imo*.—I shall remember, holy Friar.  
Bless me !

*Friar*—Benedicite !

[*Exit Friar.*]

*Imo*.—Can we taste love itself—no second brewing—  
Without some harsh ingredient in the cup ?  
Alas ! I fear in these adulterate times  
We cannot hope to see the soul of joy.  
But hear me, Fate, if that thou rul'st supreme  
The circuit of our dark or golden years ;—  
Suspend thy mixture—if thou mean'st to mix—  
And let us quaff this wine of love and joy,

Even to the very lees : take all we have,  
But covet not our loves !

*Enter Agnastus.*

*Agn.* (*aside*)—Sweet soul ! I need thy prayers :  
Hear them, kind spirits !

*Imo.*—My own Agnastus ! My love, my lord !  
I'll call thee these, for now my love resolves  
From honour to idolatry !

*Agn.*—My fair Imolene ! My love, my wife !  
(*Aside*) Oh ! cursed fate, to filch me of this joy.

*Imo.*—I heard thy step upon the avenue,  
And it awoke the perfumes of my heart.  
Wilt thou absolve me if I sin, my love ?

*Agn.*—If thou art capable of any sin,  
I will absolve thee !

*Imo.*—The sin will be in loving thee too well ;  
For I shall love thee with such ardent soul  
As make thy stars grow jealous of my zeal ;  
Ay, even in frenzy—if that bolt should strike—  
I'd find some hour to garner for thee, love !

*Agn.*—But should some buffet of misfortune come—  
Some dart of chance or graze of accident—  
Would then the fervour of thy love increase ?

*Imo.*—Oh ! ask the Elbe  
If with the troubled tributes of the brooks,  
It does not feel proportion ere it gains  
The main of parent waters. So will my love  
Increase with troubles as it would with joys.

*Agn.*—Time and fortune often mask our troubles,  
 To let us revel in luxurious laps,  
 While in the distance speeds the shaft of fate.

*Imo.*—If fate leaves love, let fortune do its worst—  
 Even strip our lives of all luxurious pomp,  
 And leave us nothing but a meagre crust,  
 On which I 'll pour the sauce and balm of love,  
 And we will feast and be delighted !

*Agn.*—Thy heart is true in sunshine and in shade.

*Imo.*—Or place us in some solitary shade,  
 Where tempests whistle all their dismal dirges,  
 And we will bid defiance to the fates,  
 And also show their inauspicious stars  
 How love can grow potential !

*Agn.*—Come, sit beside me, Excellence itself !  
 And let me read thy face, where innocence  
 Is writ with high-souled faith : upon thy face  
 The graces seem to be in dear colleague  
 To triumph with perfection. What noise was that ?

*Imo.*—I think it is the nightingale, my love ;  
 It nightly sings among the sycamores  
 That stretch their slivers o'er the avenue.

*Agn.*—I do misgive. Hear'st thou the noise again ?

*Imo.*—I hear no noise, my lord.  
 Is not our sky of love as bright  
 As yon sweet blush of dawn ?

*Agn.*—I hope so, dear one !  
 I only feel unworthy of thy love ;  
 For with my fate thou 'lt taste distressful ills,  
 And many buffets of ungainly trouble.

*Imo.*—If I am worthy to divide thy joys,

I will be worthy to divide thy sorrows.

*Agn.*—I should have left thee in the cloistered shade,

To let thee end thy dream of innocence,

As flowers that bloom unknown.

*Imo.*—Oh, my lord !

Fate has not drugged our cup of joy so soon ?

I heard weird whispers, but my ears rebelled.

Do these State troubles of revolt and war

Attack thy peace ?

*Agn.*—I have a hope our troubles will be short.

*Imo.*—Oh, be no niggard, but unfold me all,

For am I not a part of thee—thy wife ?

*Agn.*—Thou art my dear, sweet wife !

*Imo.*—If such I am, then tell me truly all—

Dwell I but in the environs of thy heart

To only hear its echoes ?

*Agn.*—Thou art its life ! but why should we misgive ?

'Tis but my plague, when overtaxed with joy,

To droop to melancholy. Thou art my wife,

Creep to my bosom like a wearied bird !

*Imo.*—Oh, happy bird, to share so sweet a nest !

I see that thou art languid ; shall I play

That favourite air upon my harp ?

*Agn.*—Not now, my love, my soul is out of tune—

To-morrow I may hear that favourite air.

*Imo.*—Then thou wilt taste the feast I have prepared ?

Although 'tis humble it is rich with love !

*Agn.*—I have no appetite for food to-night,

I 'll feast on love !

*Imo.*—Then thou wilt wear this emblem on thy breast.  
*(Offers a flower.)*

*Agn.*—It is too sweet for me !

*Imo.*—Not wear my favourite flower ?

My lord, I lack much blessing !

Then let us look at yonder roseate streaks,  
Our native peaks are bathed in fluid gold !

*Agn.*—The morn breaks gladly on the world again ;  
But to some hearts the gladness is a grief !

*Imo.*—Why, when all seems gay, art thou so sad ?

*Agn.*—I have an ill foreboding spirit, love.

But like the faithful needle to the pole,  
Thou wouldest be true, unswerving in thy love,  
If evil fate should break upon our joy ?

*Imo.*—There is some evil mixture in thy talk,  
For 'tis not now the sprightly breath of yore ;  
Thou putst a cunning mask upon thy speech,  
For 'neath thy words there lies unspoken peril.  
Dost thou regret the hasty step ?

*Agn.*—Nay, sweet soul, nay !

I only put the chances of reverse  
Into the prospect of a sad review ;—  
And even the prospect makes my spirit droop.

*Imo.*—My lord alarms me !

Fate cannot be so envious of our joy,  
That it must quaff it ere we taste it well ?

*Agn.*—Alas, my love !

*Imo.*—There lies deep peril in that heave of thine,  
Thou strikest a keynote of some evil news ;  
Oh, tell me all !—as I did wed thy love  
I wed thy troubles too.

*Agn.*—Alas ! I know not how to tell  
That which is now a load upon my heart :  
I fear our lives are married to mischance.

*Imo.*—Oh, haste, and let us hear,  
For sorrows in thy breast are due to mine !

*Agn.*—I have short time to tell thee all,  
And when all's told thy love may change to hate.

*Imo.*—Ere that can be, thy news must have  
The deadly venom of a basilisk.  
Abridge the cold and passionless detail,  
And give thy worst of news the first of words.

*Agn.*—'Tis better to be brief ;  
I must away to bondage, for I fear  
I will be stamped a felon.

*Imo.*—A felon ? Did ever words so mock ? No !  
A felon is a poor self-haunted wretch,  
One who lurks, afraid to show his face,  
And fears the glance of truth and honesty.  
A felon, love ? Thy trade is not rapine,  
Thy spirit riseth on the top of life :  
Thou dost but counterfeit, to test my love ;  
But thou wilt find it is not built on breath,  
But deeply-rooted as the forest oak !

*Agn.*—Alas ! I do not counterfeit a jot,  
I am a felon if what's true is true !

*Imo.*—A felon ? Thou, my lord, a felon ? No, no !  
Thou art the pink of chivalry and grace.  
I'll not believe it, for on thy breast I'll cling,  
And challenge the whole world !

*Agn.*—I would that it were false ;  
But it is true—too true !

*Imo.*—If it is true—truth is a traitor, love !  
And what we cherish as the beautiful,  
Is, after all, a blossom of deceit !  
If such is true, all virtue is a vice,  
And every lovely portrait is a devil.  
A felon is a thief—a stealer of sweet life :  
Art thou a thief—a stabber—an assassin ?

*Agn.*—Alas ! thou art prophetic in thy guess,  
I drew my dagger in a chafing riot—  
Struck by the hot spirits of the carnival—  
And fear I took a life.

*Imo.*—Is crime upon thy soul ?  
And does that hand blush with thy fellow's blood ?

*Agn.*—I have not heard the sequel to the deed,  
But well I know captivity is mine—  
Worse than a present death !

*Imo.*—Oh, cruel night !—detested fatal hour !  
Thou hast deceived me with a bitter drug,  
Instead of that epitome of joy  
Methought was mine immediate to taste.  
Hide thou thy withering visage, unchaste moon !  
For thou didst smile so sweetly on our vows,  
And then didst lend thy beams to this exploit ;  
And thou, soft-smiling dawn, blot thou thy beams,  
And do not flout my troubles !

*Agn.*—Have patience, love !

*Imo.*—Oh, come not near, there's blood upon thy soul !

Which all the cunning chemicals of earth  
Can never cleanse ! Who is thy victim ?

*Agn.*—A dark dissembling knave, a favourite  
At court—Azago ! Is this thy valour ?

*Imo.*—Whate'er he is, blood was not given for sport  
The meanest reptile, which we crush as vile,  
Is some mysterious minister of nature.

*Agn.*—I know the desolation and the waste  
Which falls upon the morning of our joy ;  
But if the eye of justice scan the deed,  
And vote me guiltless of the darker crime,  
Would then thy love return ?

*Imo.*—Oh, my valiant love ! Oh, pardon me !  
I saw not any chance but ill and shame,  
And such a dark, associate guiltiness,  
As froze my very soul ! The blood thou spilt  
May have been spilt to save thine own, my lord ;  
And with that sweet assurance, I will blame  
The wretch who dared to draw with thee !

*Agn.*—Ah, thou art true !

*Imo.*—The dearest virtues of the world are oft  
Beneath the heel of vice ! (*Voices without.*)

*Agn.*—I am no felon when thy love is mine !  
But we must part—I hear my captors near.

*Imo.*—And must thou go ? 'Tis death to part with thee.

*Agn.*—A few short moons may see me free again,  
For I have friends and factions on my side.

*Imo.*—I know, my lord, the city twines its love  
And hope around thee.

*Agn.*—Hark to that noise. Oh, Imolene!

I bury here my heart—thy bosom is  
Its sepulchre !

*Enter an Officer.*

*Off.*—We tracked thee to this place. Surrender, Count ;  
There is an angry populace without,  
And death awaits thee if thou darest defiance.

*Agn.*—Fate speeds the shadows on the cruel dial.  
Oh, for an Ajax prowess in my arm  
To strike the world !

*Imo.*—Wilt thou respite arrest  
For one short hour ? Do, good official,  
For we have much of moment to review  
Peculiar to our feelings.

*Off.*—The Duke is strict ; I must obey.  
These gyves are for thy wrists !

*Agn.*—Insulting slave ! I am the Count Agnastus !  
Heap no more frenzy on my burning soul,  
Or thou wilt make me execute a deed  
I had not in my purpose ! I 'll follow, slave ;  
Go on ! Farewell, my Imolene !  
This kiss sucks up my soul ! [Exit Officer.]

*Imo.*—Haste made us one ; haste has made us twain—  
Oh, stay, my lord ! (Imolene swoons.)

*Agn.*—I will not leave this rose-leaf to be blown  
By every wind of Fate. I 'll rather die !  
Look up, my sweet, and I will stay with thee :  
Restore the colour to thy ashy cheek,  
And I 'll not stir, but stay with thee and die.

---

*Imo.*—Oh, stay, my lord, and if 'tis heaven's decree,  
    Oh, let us die incorporate! To part and live  
Is but to live and die, and why prorogue  
    A death of pain?

*Enter Guards.*

*Agn.*—Begone! I have a rapier here. I 'll die  
    In this convulsive struggle of our loves!  
Go back dismayed, and tell your tyrant Duke  
    His kinsman chooses to embrace his fate  
Where his heart is enshrined. Move but one step,  
    And, though I die against a world of odds,  
This virgin lily I 'll protect, and strike  
    Against the world!

*Imo.*—My noble Spartan!     (*They embrace—tableau.*)

END OF ACT II.



## ACT III.

*SCENE I.—AN OPEN PLACE.*

(AFTER A YEAR. NIGHT.)

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*Enter Azago.*

*Aza.*—My stars have been, and are, auspicious still.  
Who prates of virtue when there's luck in vice?  
Or melts in praises of poor honesty  
When there is wealth in craft? It often brings  
A bright advantage to our grovelling state  
When honesty is eating up our lives.  
Advance me, Fate, and fill that highest hope—  
The hand of Imolene! Ha! who comes here?  
I'll muffle me awhile. [Exit.]

*Enter Jacquin, Friedman, and Conspirators.*

*Fried.*—What hour now?

*Jac.*—'Tis almost struck on twelve.

*Fried.*—'Tis a wild night.

Is not our leader tardy?

*Jac.*—He has the odds upon the meeting hour.

*Enter Itharo.*

*Ith.*—Good even all! What bodements speak  
Of success?

*Jac.*—Some spirits loosen by the whims of augury.

*Ith.*—Who is so false as trifle with our cause ?

‘Tis only cowards fear the tricks of augury.

*Jac.*—Some say the river was unruly, and did rise  
Above the arches of the Elba bridge.

*1st Con.*—Which always is the herald of events  
Most dire to men.

*Fried.*—Some say the cock kept crowing all the night,  
And vultures hovered in the open street,  
Sniffing, they say, the smell of carrion.

*Enter Imolene.*

*Imo.*—Misdoubt these auguries, or give up your cause,  
Ye bear a weakness in your very strength.

*1st Con.*—A woman here ! Our cause is now undone.

*Imo.*—Undone my friend ?

I am a spirit in this enterprise ;  
And though a woman with her weaknesses,  
A woman whose whole heart was toned by love  
To all the softer qualities of life,  
But rising with the spirit of the times,  
Is less of woman than a worshipper  
At the high altar of our liberty !

*Ith.*—Hear Imolene ; she has a steadfast soul.

It augurs well to have her countenance.

*Imo.*—Why kneel as dwarfs at Superstition’s shrine  
When your foes bulk the bolder ? Are ye men  
To strike and be the masters of yourselves,  
And yet to droop at whims of babyhood ?  
To meditate adversely on an issue  
Is but to figure failure !

*Jac.*—My spirit fastens on the project still.

*Ith.*—I think that all are in a common bond,  
And only need one link to bind the whole.

*1st Con.*—We failed already, and we plot again,  
Methinks beneath the shadow of the wheel.

*Imo.*—When white hearts fail, they fail ; but valour knows  
That failure is the whetstone of success.  
If my poor voice will bind your unity,  
Hear me, my countrymen ! Are these the times to  
fool ?

These are the times to try your sterner souls.  
Is not the sufferance of your servitude  
Enough for spur and motive in the deed ?  
Are not your motives one ? Who is there here  
Whose ear is not familiar with the knell  
Of innocent death ? Who is there here  
Whose life is not a scruple in the scales  
Upon the calling of emergency ?  
And are ye so in love with beggared life  
That ye will wear it with the bondsman's yoke ?  
Are ye with patience to endure your ills  
(Of which I have a little share, my countrymen),  
Whilst patience packs more burdens on your backs ?  
Who looks and sees the sinews of our State  
Tugged by the talons of an oligarchy—  
Who grind your lives and fancy appetites—  
While nature and necessity must starve ?  
Who sees all these—the perfumed epicures  
And ghostly want—and not feel all the heat  
Of Saxon blood rush to his craven heart,  
And cry—"Great Justice, poise thy broken scales ?"

Who looks and sees your happy husbandry—  
Which once rose smiling from the hearth to heaven—  
Swallowed by all the brazen throats of war ?  
And see the flower of men in long captivity,  
While all the filth are in authority—  
Who sees all these, and falters ?

*Jac.*—Hail, Imolene !

*Ith.*—Thy words should spur all into unity.

*Imo.*—Your faces now are dials to your souls.

Itharo, as a soldier, point your plans,  
And fix each friend into his aptest place.

*Ith.*—In barest outline, yet in full effects,

I have the soldier's hate, the people's ire  
Stirred to a point : that point will turn with me,  
If I attack the root of power. If not, I fail,  
As men will marshal on the strongest side ;  
But, once the prop is down, the fabric falls,  
And weakest wills then strengthen in the strong.  
Now, hear me, Jacquin.

You and your legion will attack the tower.

The sentinels are ready for revolt,

While we will batter at the ducal palace.

When they are won, our ranks increasing fast,

Then we will siege and take the citadel—

And fix a strong battalia in the streets :

For, even in dalliance, fight is sometimes strong

When victory but wavers on our side,

Then we will ope the prisons, and set free

The very best bloom of our citizens :

Among which is Agnastus.

*Imo.*—Spur of my soul! my love, my lord!

I now will show the valour of my love!

*Ith.*—But mark, my friends, touch not the innocent.

Let us attack the rottenness alone,  
For one fair drop that's innocently shed  
Will be a blot upon our enterprise,  
And clip the very glory of success.

*Imo.*—Amen! to that, Itharo!

*Ith.*—Are all agreed?

*All*—Agreed! Agreed!

*Jac.*—We fix our watchword—liberty!

*Imo.*—Then throw your curtains darker down, ye gods,

If you yourselves love liberty,  
And mask the visage of conspiracy!

*Ith.*—Each to his place and post in silence.

*Imo.*—And mark that each, by his own single soul,

Is mapping out his country's history.

[*Exeunt.*

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*SCENE II.—AN APARTMENT IN DUKE'S PALACE.*

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*Enter Duke.*

*Duke*—To earthen ears that wait on sluggish Time,

The figures of the future never stalk

Into the present, and to-day is but to-day:

But to the spirits, that would push the wheels,

And whip the easy laggard in its pace,

The future flashes as the flint strikes fire :  
And in the dim aurora I can see  
The shadows of a strife that staggers me !  
Last night I saw a scaffold in my sleep—  
An apparition that disturbs my peace  
When traitors have to die. That marriage too—  
Which Imolene has vouched with Agnastus—  
Brings her some steps towards my dignity,  
And menaces my power. How now, Azago ?

*Enter Azago.*

*Aza.*—Azago greets your Royal Grace.

*Duke*—Thou hast some tidings written on thy face,  
Which now avouch.

*Aza.*—I trust my love and loyalty to thee  
Will ever prompt me to betray a friend,  
If he should batter at thy dynasty.

*Duke*—Thou put'st a colour on my fears.  
Proceed, Azago !

*Aza.*—I have the substance of a fresh exploit  
To overthrow thy dynasty.

*Duke*—The full report, Azago,  
And with the swiftness of an avalanche  
I will encompass !

*Aza.*—My liege, these ciphers and these maps tell all :  
I found them in an old accoutrement  
Worn by a menial of your palace, sire,  
Friedman, your Grace !

*Duke*—Audacious traitor ! for this Azago thanks,  
His head will blacken on the Bridge at noon !

My palace mapped, and every private path  
Set down with surety : What do these ciphers mean ?

*Aza*.—Used to the task, they mean, your royal Grace,  
Itharo is the chief: he leads a lawless band,  
And their intent is to surprise your palace,  
Even now, this hour, and batter at thy life !

*Duke*.—This must be looked to :

The eagle eye and ear that holdeth power  
Must ever be upon a vivid watch :  
Take thou this warrant to the sentinel,  
And say to act immediate on the words  
At peril of his life ! And see thyself, Azago,  
That all the guards are doubled ;—patrol the town,  
And awe the spirit of the populace :  
Full-throated show before, is oft of more avail—  
In stamping down the spirit of dispeace—  
Than after, when the throats are belching fire !  
And then the shadows are the saviours of  
The substance. To the sentinel !

*Aza*.—I will obey your royal Grace at once. [Exit

*Duke*.—Great deeds oft rest upon an ebon drop !

And this vile plot to overthrow my power,  
And lay my palace in a cloud of ashes,  
Is smothered by a stroke ! These traitors hate  
The even balance of authority,  
And wish it broken into petty parts—  
Each part disloyal to the other part—  
All poising for priority—  
Scattered in schisms—with no central soul,  
So that antique antagonism may rule,

Instead of order, which all things observe  
When settling into place. They wish to break  
And mix the earthen elements of life  
With that which is its spirit and its art ;  
While nature parts both by the hand of law,  
And carves their places by stern circumstance,  
What are our arbiters ? Blood and the wheel !

*Re-enter Azago.*

(*Aside*) This worthy man

I must promote in office : As a spy  
He beggars his rewards—  
In every spirit are my orders known ?

*Aza.*—In every spirit they are known, your Grace ;  
The traitor's lair is near, and all will be  
In gyves before an hour.

*Duke*—Azago !

Thou art a man of love and loyalty ;  
Tested so oft that both go with thy name—  
Worth a battalion of Court parasites ;  
And these fresh efforts, smothering sedition,  
Establish you a guardian of the State :  
Ask your rewards, and I 'll be free to give  
Whate'er your wishes point to.

*Aza.*—Your royal Grace remembers on my suit ;  
'Tis all I ask your most potential voice  
To thrive me with—the hand of Imolene.

*Duke*—I have remembrance ; if it is your wish,  
The slave is yours !

*Aza*—I am o'erpaid ; and this o'erpays much more  
Great service to your Grace. Suffer me to say

When she is grafted with my common blood  
It will estrange her from your royalty.

*Duke*—What dost thou mean, Azago?

*Aza*.—Agnastus is thy kinsman,  
And she is his wife! It is a jar on nature—  
A plebeian scion to a royal tree—  
Or to the common eye a plebeian!  
It is a sore, your Grace, upon your name.

*Duke*—Has she avowed her marriage with the Count  
Thus openly and free?

*Aza*.—She has, your Grace.

*Duke*—It plucks my pride; and this hot-blooded boy  
Will know no more acquaintance with her love.  
Here is a warrant to arrest the slave.  
Acquaint the Friar—traitor that he is—  
That he must dislocate that prior knot,  
Under an edict from our royal seal,  
And knit another at the hour of noon.

*Aza*.—I will obey your Grace.

*Duke*—And list, Azago.

I find thou knowest the secret of her birth;  
So, when thou'rt mated—sated to the full—  
And love has but a season of the soul;  
When it is in its drooping languishment,  
Stripped of its gloss, its novelty and edge,  
And thou canst do it with an easy soul,—  
(It had been done before, but tricks of face  
Played with the purpose—and unweaponed will)  
Contrive some means—Azago, come thou near—  
For now my spur is my necessity—

To rid thyself—the river or the drug ;  
If need, the knife—and my potential voice  
Will skim the doing with officious breath,  
And silence speculation. Dost thou perceive ?  
We need but nods when spirits strike one key !  
Because she is a spectre in my path ;  
And what I thought was smothered in her state—  
Driven into death by backward circumstance—  
Is true to its tradition ; nay, it flowers  
In a spirit of specific royalty,  
And thereby is a very thorn to me—  
Nay menaces my power !

*Aza.*—I follow on, your royal Grace,  
On every point.

*Duke*—I trust in thee.

We both will flourish, or we both will fall  
At noon to-morrow, in the chamber.  
Till then, adieu !

*Aza.*—Soft slumbers to your royal Grace. [Exit.]

*Duke (alone)*—The night is almost on the edge of morn,  
And from the city breathes a conquered hush,  
Save the lone echoes of the patrol's tread ;  
While great Orion like a courtier bows :  
How solemn is this silence ! I fain would rest,  
But that the cunning sorceress of sleep,  
Instead of winding up each tired sense,  
And bringing surcease to all fevered feeling,  
Unfurls from out the abyss of the past—  
Whose ravelled windings are then clear as noon—  
The spectres of the dead. The goblet will not woo

Nor filch one sting from retrospection :  
I 'll be in debt a night's oblivion !  
And yet methinks this smacks of cowardice :  
Why should I fear ? I 'll to my couch awhile,  
And try to wind the night away.

(Retires to a couch.)

Azago ! Azago ! Azago ! I say.

(Re-enter Azago.)

Aza.—My service to your royal Grace.

Duke—I am ill at ease ; and such a graveyard gaped,  
Such bloody hands did bury in my throat,  
When I did dose : I saw but fantasies.

Aza.—I hope they bode no evil to your Grace.

If 'tis these traitors that assault your peace,  
Then their vile plot is smothered.

Duke—They bode no good ; these tricks of sleep  
Are but the shadows of unripe events,  
Or but the spectres of the buried past ;  
And yet I marvel why such fantasies  
Should move me thus.

Aza.—I marvel too, your royal Grace.

Duke—What ! dost thou echo me ?

Aza.—I will be humble, but thy innocence,  
Running like gold threads through thy duteous deeds,  
Should be the physic to thy fears.

Duke—'Tis false ! 'tis blood—ay, innocent blood,  
That reddens on my fancies : the time will waste,  
And memory may be blotted of the deeds ;  
But in my soul there are uncleanly spots

Which all the alchemies  
Can never purify ! No more, no more of this :  
How sweetens my revenge ?

*Aza.*—I have Itharo into safe arrest.

*Duke*—Sauce to my hate and relish to my vengeance !  
I have a hope to blot these traitors out,  
And bury in their graves remembrance too :  
And Imolene ?

*Aza.*—She is a captive in the palace now,  
But as the hour is seasonless——

*Duke*—All season for emergency.  
Bring the vixen of intrigue before me ;  
And hark, Azago, our seal upon her hands,  
For I did dream they were as busy looms  
Figuring against us.

*Aza.*—I will obey at once, your Grace. [Exit.

*Duke*—While I am mooded I will sweep away,  
Methinks, the substance of these visitings ;  
And though I am a traitor to my trust,  
My tongue must be the traitor of my heart :  
Treason without has bred the same within,  
And all the monuments of faith and love  
Are but their nightly shadows !

*Enter Imolene, Guards, and Azago.*

*Imo.*—What means this outrage on my private peace ?  
Have I no right, no surety of myself  
At this strange hour ? And am I so beloved  
That I must wear these jewels of your Grace ?

(Showing her gyves.)

*Duke*—Thou art before me by my apt approval.

*Imo.*—And these gyves, my liege?

Why are these rubies on my wrists?

*Duke*—Thou art a spirit of disloyal leagues;

These hands are traitors, false to their own freedom,  
And these but follow on the course of crime.

*Imo.*—Then, as a woman, I appeal to thee:

Why is my rank reviled, why treated like a thief?

Why am I handled so? My woman's weakness—

Which all true men respect—is trampled down;

And I did think some shelter would be found

At the fountain of the law, but now I find

There is no more covert in authority

Than in its humblest stay. Stand back, thou slave!

Myself is mistress of my dignity!

*Duke*—Silence, slave!—Thou art no more or less.

*Imo.*—A slave? The Countess of Agnastus I stand here!

And glory in the jointure of the name.

And thou dost dare to traffic or colleague

That name with me? It doth at once awake

The slumbering devil of a free-born soul,

Whose sire is self! That lie I could uproot,

And leave thy vile throat tongueless!

*Duke*—These are the servants of authority.

*Imo.*—Are these the stays of thy authority?

These hirelings, stabbers, and banditti, sire?

They have some smack of honesty and truth,

For they are true to hire, but when it halts

Where is my royal liege?

*Duke*—In fewest words, thou art my captive.

*Imo.*—Am I thy captive? Then what is my crime?

If it would please, arraign me by myself,  
For their dark looks would taint the innocent,  
And make pure truth to falter on my tongue.  
Your Grace suspects I've been disloyal?

*Duke*—Besides a spirit of disloyal leagues,

I learn now, on the aptest proof, you are  
By some intrigue, methinks, the wedded wife  
Of my young kinsman—now a captive here  
For acts of treason and of felony.

*Imo.*—I am the wife of Count Agnastus,  
Won by the spirit of a selfless love,  
And not by an intrigue.

*Duke*—I say that some intrigue or sorcery  
Did dupe Agnastus to the deed.

*Imo.*—'Tis false!

*Duke*—'Tis true!

*Imo.*—By every holy bond, I am his wife!  
Call it a lie! My truth will but retreat  
Upon the stronghold of my innocence,  
And hold it with my life!

*Duke*—Hear me!

You must relinquish by a legal deed,  
To satisfy the laws of Saxony—  
Although my will could cancel by a stroke—  
All claim, relationship, and kin to him.  
Nay, I have fixed my will so sure on this,  
That I will forfeit your immediate life  
Unless you join my wishes. Though I have power  
To put my wishes in substantial form,

Yet I have motives to prefer your choice  
As if it welled from pleasure.  
What is your choice—  
To die or live without Agnastus ?

*Imo.*—I can die !

*Duke*—Nay, if thou wilt be mated with a man,  
I nominate this worthy man, Azago,  
He fills Agnastus' place in Court,  
And why not in your heart ?

*Aza.*—Here, gentle lady,  
I dedicate myself to thee.

*Imo.*—Back, thou heap of infamy !  
A daring devil thou ! Before I'd consort thee,  
Oh, shut me rather in a vulture's clasp ;—  
Prison me with vampires : let them suck my blood,  
By tedious drops, till the last dreg of life  
Cries to weak nature—hold ! Back, villain !

*Duke*—If thou 'lt traduce, I may extend my charge,  
And call thee traitress, and a spirit of  
A most disloyal league : which merits death !  
Dost thou hear—death ?

*Imo.*—Pratest thou of death ? It may o'erawe the coward.  
I hold my life but as its broken flower,  
To pluck or wither as my fortune blows.  
Here is a bosom resolute with truth,  
Thrice armed with love, and frankly, as a pin,  
I'd lay my life down at your royal feet,  
To hold our vows inviolate.

*Duke*—List to these sounds : they come from busy hands  
Preparing at a wheel. At noon precisely

Itharo and Agnastus will be broken there.  
If you have love,  
Avouch it by that virtue, sacrifice—  
Refuse, and by the rigour of my will—  
You 'll be Azago's wife.

*Imo.*—Oh, excellent authority ! oh, tyrant power !  
Thou usest well thy strength upon the weak,  
But if thou 'lt force, upon thy soul will lie  
The vast entail of violated vows  
And perjured oaths. If 'tis my life  
Thou need'st, I pray you take it at a stroke,  
But let my soul be true !

*Duke*—I must be true to the necessity.

*Imo.*—No drachm of right in thy authority ?  
Then spur me noble nature with defiance !  
Now in my weakness I have found some strength !  
Not all your racks, your engines, and your wheels,  
Can ever loosen an immortal link.

*Duke*—Thou 'lt find I rule by iron, not a reed  
To bend with every blowing of the hour

*Imo.*—Wilt thou proceed to such extremities,  
And hack and maim, that only martial man  
Who is so honourable a part of me ?  
And he whose fault is love of country ?  
Spilling the tributary fountain of thy blood.  
Nature is not so false ! And yet, I fear,  
The tempest in my heart blurs my belief ;  
But there I see my lord upon the wheel,  
His martial limbs dismembering joint by joint,  
His full-souled face black in an agony !

Oh, stay, my liege ! my nature is yet true,  
Even though 'tis false !                           (*She swoons.*)

*Duke*—I fear her wits,  
Give her the air, she will restore anon.  
That scrap, Azago, falling from her breast,  
What is it ?

*Aza*.—Methinks it is a counterfeit,  
A cipher copy of that plan, my liege.

*Duke*—She is a spirit in that treason too—  
Short work will answer us.

(*Imolene revives.*)

*Imo*.—My royal liege, my fate is in your hands,  
I cannot wear my trust at such a cost,  
These jewels, too, I will with pleasure wear,  
For now I feel the sun has risen up  
And thawed the icicles about my brain.  
'Tis very clear ! my liege, oh, pardon me !  
I have but puffed a little feeble breath  
Against the avalanche ; I have but prated,  
Have only played a part :—forgive me, sire,  
And you, my future consort, let me thank  
And ask your pardon. When saidst thou ?

*Duke*—In the chamber on the morrow  
At noon. Thou seest this ?

*Imo*.—I do ;  
And bury my confusion in a blush.  
'Tis very meet I should obey, when such a fault  
Is so slid over.

*Duke*—Thou riseth to the level of necessity,  
And thou wilt have our pardon.

*Imo.*—My liege, I thank you!

*Aza.*—Thy hand, my Imolene!

*Imo.*—Not yet! not yet!

To-morrow, in the chamber, it is thine  
For evil or for good!

END OF ACT III.



**A C T IV.**

*SCENE I.—AN APARTMENT IN PALACE.*

(ONE NIGHT ELAPSES. NOON.)

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*Enter Duke and Attendant.*

*Duke*—More pestilential pleas?

It is my plague, when traitors have to die,  
To have their merits plumed and powdered o'er  
By courtier fools. I'll hear no more!

*Att.*—Your royal Grace, Itharo's execution  
Draws on apace—a plea for a respite—  
Signed by your secret Council.

*Duke*—My Council, then, is aiding and abetting  
Treason and felony?

*Att.*—Your royal signature is all  
I dare to ask—

*Duke*—My signature—thus!

[Stamping on it with his foot.

Thus do I show superiority!

Withdraw! [Exit Attendant.

Though round me thrones are falling like the flakes  
That build the iceberg of a thousand years—  
Dissolving by the lukewarmness of will—  
Mine, like the mighty monarch of the sea,  
Securely knits, as swaying to a point  
That knows no tepid airs: Itharo's execution

Takes place within the hour, and Imolene  
Is cancelled from the pathway of my power.  
Stars fix my purpose! on this pivot turn  
The health or the disease of dynasty.  
How is't with me, that deeds, resolved in thought,  
Begin to waver when the act draws near?  
There is a treason 'twixt my hand and heart,  
For I have swept such traitors from my sight  
Without a scruple of remorse or fear;  
But these are days of anarchy and strife—  
Loud heavings heard—untuning of degree—  
Strange stirrings onward of the people's pulse—  
Art in revival, and the new-born Sciences  
Make thick the air with shadows of a shaft  
That is to split Society; and Power,  
Dipped in the olive of divinity,  
Begins to lose its sacredness. How cam'st thou?

*Enter Fidele.*

*Fid.*—I came, your royal Grace, alone—

My spur has been my love, and I have faith  
That mercy has been seasoning your heart.  
I love Itharo, sire!

*Duke*—Lov'st thou his treason and his faults?

*Fid.*—Faults, my liege, are the common heritage  
Of all mortality! What is your Grace's will?

*Duke*—Our will, though 'tis colleagueud with pity,

Must blot the actor, with the action, out.  
He dies at noon, and I am absolute!

*Fid.*—Can man, poor moth, be absolute in will?

We pray for mercy from the Absolute—

Whose will must know no changing scruple,  
But ever fixèd on eternal poise,  
True as the balance of the universe !  
Sees first and final of evolving law.  
And art thou fixèd as the Absolute ?  
Why need we, with petition or with plea,  
Send breath from every synagogue to heaven,  
To bless our country and to bless your Grace ?  
If thou—arrayed in colours of an hour—  
Presum'st upon the attributes of God ?  
Be merciful, and let Itharo live !

*Duke*—If I am merciful, I can not be just.

*Fid.*—If thou hast mercy, thou hast justice too,  
For in the sweet philosophy of Heaven,  
They are two rivals, yet two dear colleagues !  
My life is woven with Itharo's, sire ;  
And if thou takest one, thou takest both,  
As like a flower that's broken on the stalk,  
I'll wither in my widowhood of heart ;  
Bethink, your Grace, if happy circumstance  
Should turn the current of Itharo's love—  
(Which now spills sadly on the loam of life)  
Into the loyal service of your Grace,  
What happiness to both ? And I perceive  
That sense, so long a truant in all youth,  
Begins to map his march !

*Duke*—When once one leaf of loyalty is broke,  
The tree must fall ! 'Tis rotten at the root,  
And all his love would be an aftermath,  
Trustless and bare ! He dies at noon !

*Fid.*—Must I depart, your Grace, without a hope?

Here, at the feet of royal majesty,  
I kneel and plead for my Itharo's life !  
A little life, oh ! spare me by a stroke—  
A little cipher, what is it to your Grace ?  
And yet that cipher means so much to me !  
If my Itharo lives,  
I will become a hostage for his faith,  
Aye wear his chains as jewels of my life :  
My royal liege, be royal in thy soul,  
And spare his life !

*Duke*—Thou plead'st in vain, for I am absolute !

*Fid.*—The flinty bosom of the stubborn rock  
Impresses with one single mountain drop ;  
I urge no more : I will appeal to Heaven !  
Farewell, my liege, and thanks ! [Exit.]

*Enter Azago.*

*Duke*—Azago !

Are all things ready for the execution ?

*Aza.*—They are for both, your Grace.

*Duke*—For both ? What mean'st thou ?

I gave no warrant for a double death.

*Aza.*—Bethink, your Grace, if I wed Imolene,  
And put your wishes into forward form,  
While he still lives, that is her husband still,  
My life would be  
No better than immediate death ! What jars ?  
What bloody feuds, and anarchy would be  
(Sapping the very supports of your power)  
Let loose upon occasion ?

*Duke*—Expostulate with me?

Assault me rather with a million swords,  
And better did'st thou die,  
Than come within the whirlwind of my will !  
Though to my bosom thou art privy much,  
There is a world between us ! If thou must speak,  
Speak from the suburbs of my soul, Azago,  
Not at the shrine of self.

*Aza*.—I will be humble to your royal Grace,  
I only meant the rite and execution.

*Duke*—Thy words equivocate thy better sense.

How look the people on the deed ?

*Aza*.—With calm, submissive spirits,  
And loyal to the law.

*Duke*—What is the hour ?

*Aza*.—'Tis almost noon.

*Duke*—I hear the surging populace without—

Eager for blood ! Get thee to the chamber,  
And make all preparation for the rite.

*Aza*.—I will obey at once, your Grace. [Exit.]

*Duke*—I will subdue this menace to my power,

If not erase—by grafting her so lowly,  
If't will not smother her in her lower life,  
Then royalty has something still divine  
Amid the slime, nonpareil ! The die is down,  
But through the adamantine will, the voice  
Of nature speaks ! Agnastus still will live,  
He is my kinsman, though he is my foe !

[Exit.]

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**SCENE II.—A CHAMBER.**(ALTAR PREPARED—TAPERS BURNING.)

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*Enter Friar Herman.*

*Friar*—'Tis almost noon ; and when it strikes,  
It rings Itharo's knell, and the sad fate  
Of Imolene. These walls but echo to  
The headsman's axe—  
To sounds of broken hearts, when sacrificed  
Upon the altar of expediency !  
And on her wits, unbalanced and unstrung  
By deep distress, emergency plays well.  
She is not false—no higher spirit  
Was ever married with mortality.  
Oh, Saxony ! Oh, Saxony ! my country !  
Thy spirit muffles down !—and you, my Mother  
Church,  
Kneeling to Power, and propped by stays of State—  
What art thou but a slave ? But hush !—they  
come.

*Enter Duke, Azago, Imolene, and Guards.**Duke*—The nuptials, Friar, we would celebrate.*Friar*—With all convenient speed.

Ere I proceed, she must untwist the knot  
I tied already by our holy Church,

And satisfy the laws of Saxony.  
Daughter, is 't thy free choice ?  
And dost thou freely dislocate the deed  
Heaven has attested ?

*Imo.*—Free ? I echo thee !

I prithee, Friar, to be spare in words,  
I have my courage balanced with the deed,—  
Thy words may but undo me.

*Friar*—Hast thou no last commission to thy lord ?—

No final message to his heart ?

*Imo.*—Nothing, but my love !

*Duke*—I prithee, Friar, to proceed.

*Imo.*—My liege, a word. Thou seest I enter well  
Into the spirit of my new espousal,  
And every humour of your royal Grace  
I will obey : but prithee might I ask  
One trifling favour for Itharo, sire ?

*Duke*—Since thou art easy and obeyst the time,  
Our pleasure is to hear thee.

*Imo.*—My liege, I thank you !

Suffer a bullet to dispatch his life,  
And save the awful maiming of the wheel ;  
And let the hour be four, instead of twelve,  
For by that time I will be lost and won.  
And it is meet that deeds  
Of such opposing omen may be put  
More in division. Suffer thy slave to plead  
That in our nuptials we have no escort—  
No gossip gapers to rehearse my fate.

I wish to bury in forgetfulness  
All memory of the past, and hail the future  
Unheralded by all.

*Friar (aside)*—She gives no token of her wayward wits.

*Duke*—Fair are thy wishes, and immediate grant  
Will wait on each and all. Azago.

(*Aside*) She will be easy when her wits are so.  
Guards ! dismiss yourselves.

(*To a Guard*) The warrant also for Itharo's death  
Suspend, until my signet I do send  
Unto the general of the citadel.

*Imo.*—Prithee, a line ! (*To a Guard.*)

[*Exeunt Guards, &c.*]

*Duke*—What is that writing, Imolene ?

*Imo.*—A simple scrap—a message to Itharo !  
To bid him like a soldier bear his fate,  
And suffer like a man ! The silence falls.  
Are we alone ?

*Aza.*—Not an insect flutters.

*Imo. (aside)*—The stroke of noon. The trumpet sounds—  
All is yet well ! (*Trumpet without.*)

*Aza.*—Thy hand, my Imolene !

*Imo.*—In a glove of steel !  
My country's canker and my country's curse,  
This dagger to thy heart !

(*She snatches a concealed dagger, and stabs Azago, who falls.*)

*Aza.*—Oh, traitress ! traitress ! (dies.)

*Duke*—Treason ! What ho ! Guards !

*Imo.*—Behold, I have unsexed myself !  
And here I stand, not as a woman weak,

A slave and vassal to my royal liege,  
But as the arbitress of justice ! Nay, stir not—  
We are alone ; thy Guards dismissed, thy federary,  
Is now no more the agent of thy crimes :  
Thou hast no weapon, only I am armed—  
Armed to the teeth with all my country's wrongs,  
And all her guiltless blood shed by thy hand !  
The thunder of her voice has rolled into  
This single soul, and bids me strike  
For her lost liberty : save thou thy stirring.  
Thou knowest well we are  
Beneath the palace, by a ravelled path,  
That leads into the citadel, where I—  
Failing in fair means, checkmate thee in craft—  
Yea I, my liege ; I, Imolene, thy slave,  
Have won the spirits of the soldiery.  
Father !  
Touch thou that panel—well, I know the place ;  
Let in my legion of undaunted hearts !  
I will not be your executioner. (*Voices without.*)

*Friar*—But where is my authority ?

*Imo.*—Son of a slave !

At my dagger's point !

*The Friar touches a secret spring on the wall—a passage opens through which Jacquin and Conspirators pass.*

*Duke*—Baffled and betrayed ! oh, traitors all !

*Jacquin*—A father and a brother's blood

I will avenge ! This to thy heart ! (*Stabs Duke.*)

*2nd Con.*—A sister's honour too !                   (*Stabs Duke.*)

*3rd Con.*—A mother's martyrdom !      (*Stabs Duke.*)

*Duke*—Oh, caitiffs ! caitiffs !      (*He dies.*)

*Imo.*—Full draught of vengeance ! justice is appeased,  
And liberty, let loose by guilty blood,  
Rises already on the wings of love,  
Free as the heavens ! What say you Father ?  
Your holy voice should be the first to bless.

*Friar*—These deeds of blood  
Speak with one voice to Saxony !

*Imo.*—If otherwise thy holiness is false,  
And all thy symbols are but jugglery  
That varnish o'er the royal rights of men !  
This blow we gave  
Upon the altar of the holiest,  
Highest of all, justice and liberty !  
Go spread the news that Saxony is free—

[*Exeunt Conspirators.*]

Free as the eagle in the vaulty air ;  
And, in the name of Saxony, let fall  
The royal ensign on the citadel !  
It is the emblem of a people's wrongs ;  
And in its place let loose upon the breeze  
The grand old banner of her liberty !

(*To Friar*) Thou knowst the dungeon of my lord ?

*Friar*—Too well, good daughter !

*Imo.*—Unfix his fetters ; let his soul be free !  
And all the best bloom of our citizens.  
Itharo also, whose life awaits despatch—  
Bring unto me.      [*Exit Friar.*]

*Re-enter Jacquin and Conspirators.*

What news, good hearts ?

*Jac.*—Struck from the wildfire of the hour,  
The news is flying ; as the voices spread  
The ensign falls ; caps bury in the air,  
And joy is upper : so untuned is life  
That music's striking from the harshest strings,  
While from a chorus of unmuzzled throats  
Ring “ Liberty ! liberty ! tyranny is dead ! ”

*Enter Friar and Agnastus.*

*Imo*—Soul of my soul ! my sunshine and my life !  
I now have shown the valour of my love ;  
I gave this blow for thee and Saxony !  
*Agn.*—Fruit of my life ! my valiant Imolene !  
I knew thy heart was made of bravest stuff.

*Enter Itharo and Fidele.*

*Ith.*—My saviour, let me kneel and thank !  
*Imo.*—Rise, brave Itharo ! I have kept my word—  
And thou blurred blossom, smiling through thy tears,  
Dear Fidele !  
*Ith.*—Oh, my dear lord ! let me drop dews of pity  
Around thy shadowy shape.  
*Agn.*—Thanks, brave Itharo : life with me  
Burns dimly in its socket ; but love and joy—  
Already toning at the vital strings—  
Begin to fan the flame !  
*Imo.*—Oh, my love ! my lord !  
My flood of feeling overpowers my tongue ;

But here our country is without a head,  
And to arrest the seeds of anarchy,  
Which start  
Upon the breaking of authority—  
The crown must fall on thee !

*Friar*—On both ! A word, my countrymen :  
The death of this usurper ends an oath  
Which I was sworn to. That oath did bind me down  
To hold inviolate—secret as the tomb—  
The hidden history of this heroine.  
I now am free ; and, Saxons, can you see  
No cunning token of her royalty ?  
She is the daughter of your much-loved Otto,  
Whose reign was love—rounding his realm in peace  
When other States were in the broils of war :  
Her life and rank were buried in her birth,  
And he proved faithless to a holy trust—  
Enslaving her to mask his usurpation.  
Hail Imolene your Queen !

*All*—Hail Imolene, our Queen !

*Imo.*—My countrymen ! I will not waste my words—  
The past is past, the future is our own—  
I see our spirits are already one ;  
Already do my veins thrill royal fire !  
Now I will set, colleagued with my lord,  
To bind the gashes of my broken realm ;  
And where misrule has broke its spirit down,  
Let every wind be pilgrim of my love,  
And breathe the spirit of my ancestor.  
Your country now is in the crucible,

But from the ashes of your liberties  
There will arise, purged by refining fire,  
Pure justice, peace, and full security—  
All that make nations great ; and Saxony—  
Exhausted by unnecessary wars,  
Or rotting by dishonourable peace—  
Will, phœnix-wise, rise from its present tomb,  
Triumphal to its ancient pride and place !  
*All—Hail ! Imolene, our Queen !*

*Curtain falls.*

T H E   E N D.





## **LEAVES OF LIFE.**

## • *THE TOWER*

• *BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL*

• *WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY DE WOLF FLEMING*

• *ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY DE WOLF FLEMING*

# LEAVES OF LIFE.

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## POEMS.

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### SHADOWS OF THE COMING STRIFE.

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The shadows of the coming strife are looming on our view,  
The battle-blast is blowing 'twixt the many and the few ;  
Both buckle on their armour now preparing for the fray,  
The battle will be lost and won, but who will win the day ?  
Is wealth to roll its sunless heaps upon man's toil and  
tears ?

Or will great Justice poise her scales and right the wrongs  
of years ?

And fill anew the golden cup of all mismeasured wealth,  
In which are hid the soul and strength and all the dews of  
health.

Must all the littles of a life be brimmed in one great cup  
For sloth to quaff when labour rolls the drift of riches up ?  
Must still men's lives be ground in grooves and spun to  
aged pain,

So that across their hearts may move the idol-wheels of  
gain ?

The god of gold rules every place—their merits—gold of  
God

Are by the Juggernaut rolled o'er, and in the mire down-trod.

By Justice men will reach their rights if they no more will  
kneel

As dwarfs beneath the hoof of power and 'neath the gilded  
heel.

Above the altars wreathed in gold, arise up to the shrine  
Where only Merit marks a man, and Justice stamps divine.  
At their high altars let men stand, and ask exchange for toil  
A measure meted full, and cast their burdens on the soil.  
The fertile meads to one and all, a birthright, nature gave,  
Yet man denies his brother's needs, and stamps him as a  
slave.

What is his native heath to him? a blank, an empty name,  
The alien holds the biggest keys, red with a nation's shame.  
He loves his native land, but why? where is his native  
land?

His birthright is bequeathed and diced upon the strangers'  
hand,

For luxury to revel high and fancy idle need,  
While saints in poverty, alas! in squalid silence bleed;  
While Heaven spreads round a feast of joy it sounds to  
him a jest,

He still remains an outcast and an uninvited guest.

Want's winds his blyther hopes destroy, and sours his sense  
of right,

While in God's vineyard plenty smiles—must he still want  
a bite?

But now great power will soon be given to ease his down-trod state,

His voice will soon be franchised, and will mould a better fate.

And when great Power like snow-wreaths melts, and he must drift it up,

He must give vote and voice to men who will not mix his cup.

Already scattered by the winds and broadcast o'er the land,  
His ancient foes have sown their seeds, but sown them in the sand.

No more again will he bend down and crook the manly knee,  
A better fate he holds in hand—the franchise is the key.

The bloodstained path of Freedom's foes let him with patience scan,

When civil right was under foot and Freedom 'neath the ban.  
The wild vine kills the forest oak, let no shoots bloom to power,

But let them fall upon the rock and wither ere they flower.

And Bigotry his face hides still in Superstition's mask,  
To prison thought and fetter will when both should brightly bask ;

But man will rise and no more bend, why should he not be free,

When Nature, his great mother, kneels with her immortal key ?

The poison tree takes long to flower, mark well its crafty bud,

So bloometh priestcraft slow, to seal his liberties in blood.

And must he longer bear the brand upon his holy tie ?  
When it is blessed by Nature's hand must priestcraft give  
the lie ?  
His day of rest, too, given to fill his toil-drawn cup with  
glee,  
Is but a day on which he limps upon hypocrisy :  
It withers up his better parts, and anchors him still fast  
Upon the sluggish sea that beats upon the perished past,  
Upon the flood of fresher hope, he struggles to be free,  
With love and law as true as truth, and Heaven's own  
axle-tree,  
While Hell's fire-figure blushes down, and ancient scars  
of wrath  
Upon God's brow are blotting out, and from his earthward  
path.  
If hell is true then love is false, if true, mirth is alloy ;  
If He on it a shadow drew, why give the soulshine joy ?  
Bring out the faggots, lit the fire, and by the breaking  
morn  
See it upon its funeral pyre, and strife, of glory shorn ;  
And by the bright aurora, see the waters at the head  
Are spotless in their purity, but man has tinged them red.

The autumn of a larger faith unties the sheaves of life,  
And sees its ears are scorched and blurred by ever-present  
strife,  
And by that too which seeks to mould its heavenward  
destinies.  
Alas ! that faith should be so false, and grow round Upas  
trees ;

Must still religion calmly look upon the downward trod,  
And seek to save and bring souls thro' the gutter to their  
God.

If life is false and love a sham, where are the stays of faith ?  
If men will think life but a flower that ceases with a breath;  
But while the flowers are on the stalks they claim their  
share of soil,

For joy rose-lipped to rim life with the dewy crown of toil.  
And though of all the fruits of Time the fittest will survive,  
What has bloomed best in ages gone, the aptest will revive :  
The spirit of the past still breathes, and when its chaff is  
blown,

The true will live, the false will die, the future will be sown  
With all the brightest flowers of life, that blossomed in the  
East

When liberty and love were law, and Art was Nature's  
priest.

Too long the idol wheels of wealth have rolled upon the  
true,

Its mighty towers will soon dissolve, and spread their golden  
dew.

As the lone icebergs sailing slow upon the icebound seas,  
Snow crystals of a thousand years, yet when they catch  
the breeze,

Their proudest peaks that rose so high, and seemed the  
earth to spurn,

Touched by the blyther airs, into their elements return.  
So when the mighty tower is breached, the Right will  
raise one too,

And carve on it the Beautiful, and with the Good and True !

But, 'mid the false, let man now dare to be as true as steel,  
And rise a man, no more a dwarf, at empty shrines to  
kneel.

At Nature's altar let him stand, and let her priestess preach,  
Still man for man, and each for all, and ever all for each ;  
And Justice will be umpire then, amid the bloodless strife,  
To close the yawning gulfs that break the balances of life.

---

### FAMILY FAILINGS.

---

Two shopocrats did jointly own  
A cottage, built of lime and stone—  
A suburb snug retreat.  
From landlord sharks they both were free,  
And life swung round right merrily,  
Unshaded, smooth, and sweet.

A bosom friendship soon sprung up,  
Spiced sometimes by the loving cup,  
Which went the royal round :  
And when the consorts left for town,  
The wives blew chat like thistledown,  
Altho' some might rebound.

The pipe of rumour even blew,  
The ladies liked their mountain dew,  
And really it might be :

At least 'tis true, the happy pair,  
Laid every family failing bare,  
Across their cups—of tea !

Light sparks alone may do no harm,  
Small leaks may never cause alarm,  
When ships are strong and staunch ;  
But when the good craft, friendship, feels  
Its tackle torn, and rolling reels—  
Beware ! the avalanche !

A breath brought down that avalanche,  
For Jones's little blossom, Blanche,  
Did prate to little Brown,  
That grandpa once did earn his bread  
By hawking hairpins and such trade,  
Which brought a freezing frown.

Fate followed up the coldness fast  
By sending such a snowy blast  
Who does not then remember ?  
The freaky winds blew shrill and loud,  
And wove the cottage in a shroud,  
Just two years last December.

The winds had curled a pretty wreath,  
But not to each did shares bequeath,  
So broke uncivil war ;  
Each caught the other pitching o'er  
A portion to the neighbour door,  
Which now stood quite ajar.

With lightest hearts both threw the glove  
And broke at once the bond of love,  
    So long without a flaw;  
So, skirmishing away, at length  
They both resolved to try their strength  
    Within the lists of law.

When love is low, how little mars !  
When tempers strike, a trifle jars,  
    And flares them up like rockets.  
The lawyers got the ropes to pull,  
And dipped, as is their golden rule,  
    Deep in their clients' pockets !

Slow dragged the case through courts of law  
Till April came with genial thaw  
    (The storm had much more pelted)  
And when I heard the other day—  
The snow, of course—the clients—nay,  
    The house itself had melted.

*L'ENVOI.*

If people will a moral draw,  
Then do not tamper with the law,  
    Unless you have a mine ;  
And when you build in partnership,  
Think little leaks will sink that ship,  
    When loaded past the line.

---

## ADDRESS TO A WHALE.

Hail, Prince of Whales ! who in your Arctic Oceans  
So late was sporting in leviathan glory ;  
If you could speak, how could you clear our notions  
Of that vast zone enshrined in tragic story,  
And where beleaguered Nature has withdrawn  
To hide one secret from the heart of man.

“ Thus far,” she says to him, “ thou mayst travel,  
Beyond is shut unto thy mortal view ;  
The secret there I dare thee to unravel,  
But death awaits thee if thou darest to do.”  
Yet thou, old whale, may know this plaguey Pole,  
And nod acquaintance, like a good old soul !

Perhaps that tail of yours did lash in sportive glee  
That same old Pole which man has sought so vainly :  
Then tell us, is it like an axletree ?  
Before it do all other poles look tamely ?  
And could you thread the labyrinth of road  
That leads to it, and man has never trod ?

Thou comest from the latitude of Thule,  
And from the isles of thick-ribbed ice and snow :  
Say, was your whaleship ever in a “ school ? ”—  
And was a “ spouter,” and a youth to “ blow ? ”  
And did you blubber like a baby when  
Your mother, Nature, sent the hurricane ?

They say you live upon the sparest diet—  
And yet to gather such a mound of flesh !  
If we lived less on luxury—oh ! fie it !—  
Would we have blubber beautiful and fresh  
As that you wore before you lost your life,  
And fell a victim unto Struthers' knife ?

Well did you fight for glorious liberty,  
And long you held your enemies at bay—  
A victor vanquished, dying to be free,  
Among the thirsty sea-dogs of the Tay,  
Not 'mong your native pyramids of ice,  
But here, a victim to man's avarice !

Say, did that tail o'erturn a cockle kajak,  
And send sad sorrow to some Eskimo ?  
And in those thrilling regions did you dodge Jack  
When coming up to have a morning “blow ?”  
And did your blowing pierce the ear of day,  
Which with the night holds long alternate sway ?

And did you a paraselene see,  
When four false moons are rivals of the true ?  
And see auroras melting gloriously,  
In onyx, opal, amethyst, and blue ?  
And all the fairy freaks of Polar hues—  
Tell us, old whale, what crossed those broader views ?

And did you ever see the “ Devil's thumb ”  
With wild Niagaras frozen as they flow ?  
Still silent, whale ! Still are you calmly dumb !  
When you have revelled in such visions so.

And can you tell us where brave Franklin lies,  
With all the heroes of his enterprise ?

And did you see the sun gild white-crowned mountains  
With alabaster of the Polar snow ?

And did you pierce the veil of fairy fountains  
And see old Nature's pristine palette glow  
In hues that veiled the Grecian Arethusa,  
And aught I know else—Helen and Medusa ?

And have you felt the hurricanes that whip  
The silver seas into a boil of surf ?

And seen the mighty avalanches slip ?  
And that unfading spot of vivid turf  
Which travellers say in pristine beauty glows  
Amongst Saharas of eternal snows ?

Perhaps you are a spy, you Prince of Whales,  
Sent to take notes upon our territory—  
(Ugh ! such an odour from your hide exhales) ;  
But is your whaleship either Whig or Tory ?  
And have you Georges underneath the sea  
Arighting wrongs and wronging rights, like we ?

And have you in your regions such a thing  
As "Local Option" and "Permissive Bills" ?  
And do your "spouters" on falsetto ring ?  
Or do you leave all to their own sweet wills ?  
Or is 't because you wished a newer brewin'  
That brought your doom and this stupendous ruin ?

Still silent, whale ? I see you will not speak ;  
And now I feel your hide is something smelly :  
But tell us, could old Jonah pass a week  
In such an ugly graveyard of a belly ?  
If so, forgive me, but I 'd be like he,  
And blubber out repentance to be free !

---

### THE HOMELESS POOR.

---

Out as the homeless poor,  
Our roof the midnight skies,  
We lay our heads on the frozen turf,  
And try to close our eyes.  
Strayed from the fold,  
We are so cold  
In diseases past all cure,  
We long for death to stop the breath  
Of the hungry, homeless poor !

We once were chaste and pure  
As the coverlet of snow  
That wraps us o'er as the morning breaks—  
Breaks to renew our woe.  
The wild sea breeze  
Brings its lullabies  
To the fallen all obscure ;  
We 're hunted down from the sheltering town,  
Because we are not pure.

There are cramps and coughs in the breeze,  
In the dark December eve ;  
But the elements have a kinder voice  
Than the city we must leave.  
In the seats of power  
May the wretches cower,  
Till Authority be sure  
It has less sin than the cheeks worn thin  
Of the hounded, homeless poor.

On the fripperies of the vain  
We would be warmly clad ;  
And the crumbs from the tables of the rich  
Would make us all so glad.  
But we are trash,  
And the pitiless lash  
Of the law we must endure,  
Which falls so full, as a common rule,  
On the heads of the homeless poor.

Through the ermine robes of power  
And symbols of high state,  
How oft do we see the darkest heart,  
And the hand that carved our fate !  
And that high head,  
On whose nod we are led  
To the prison, will allure  
In a lustful hour, the poor, frail flower ;  
And she falls—but she is poor !

Oh! for the tones of the voice !  
The motherly eye that 's gone !  
To see our sad and solitary tears  
We bitterly shed alone !  
Tho' our end is near,  
Yet her voice would cheer ;  
And our last sands might run pure,  
Though hard the hill, we might climb it still,  
And be no more impure !

---

#### A PLAINT FROM THE PAVEMENT.

---

One night when midnight struck the hour,  
Upon the lofty city tower,  
I met a maid in tears.  
I asked what heaved the deep-drawn sigh,  
If Fate had cut some tender tie,  
Or broke the love of years ?

A shade upon her face did sit,  
And blurred her brow as shadows flit  
Upon a myrtle leaf ;  
As April smiles thro' gloomy skies,  
She silent stood and dried her eyes,  
And told her tale of grief.

"I am a poor, hard-working girl,  
Late rudely thrust upon Life's whirl,  
Without a friend or foe ;

And to be true, the more I see  
The less I like; and to be free,  
    The less I wish to know.

“I am a girl, I own ’tis true,  
But now that lucid line’s in view  
    That opes an amplitude;  
When opening hearts like mine may see  
A world of love all pure and free,  
    In realms of womanhood.

“As in the forest lone we see  
The frailer flowers around the tree  
    For shield and shelter twine,  
So to the oak of Virtue yet  
I cling, and lay my violet  
    At Love’s own simple shrine !

“They told me law did make me free,  
But now I find authority  
    My freedom really steals.  
I cannot walk from a soiree,  
But sleuth-hounds of the law, I see,  
    Are dogging at my heels !

“In paths of pity I have trod  
This night, where sorrow’s chastening rod  
    Has fallen rudely down :  
If I am free, then tell me why  
Am I so glared at—measured by—  
    The watch dogs of the town ?”

### A MAIDEN'S PRAYER.

---

Upon a lowly couch there lies a maiden faint and weak,  
Her hands are clasped towards the skies in adoration  
meek ;—

“ Father,” she lisps in accents mild, “ oh ! hear my simple  
prayer

For health’s returning glow—a gift to me so priceless fair !

“ I was despondent many years, the grave seemed opening  
fast ;

But oh ! I feel Thy angel health now fills my cup at last :  
And oft when near the noon of night, I felt the shade of  
death,

But still I clung to hope’s last leaf, and to the rock of  
faith !

“ And when I felt the bitter dews fall on me like a blight,  
And life was in the balances that wavered with the night,  
Methought I felt an angel near, who gave a heavenly sigh,  
Which turned the scales of life, and then I knew I would  
not die.

“ Now every day my heart is filled with hope and joy to live,  
And, Heavenly Father, all my thanks I now with fervour  
give ;

And though I fretted in my pain, forgive my spirit’s strife,  
For now I know from suffering grows the blessedness of  
life !”

### BABYHOOD.

---

Sweet fruit upon Love's fragrant tree ;  
Rich gem in Life's poor treasury ;  
Blest bead upon Heaven's rosary—  
Little Tommy !

Of man thou dear epitome,  
Rebuke me in prosperity,  
And cheer me in adversity—  
Little Tommy !

---

### DROWNED IN DEE.

---

It is now a good many years ago  
In this city by the sea,  
Since I and my darling, my bride, and my life,  
Were ferrying over the Dee ;  
And many glad hearts were eager to taste  
At the fountains of the free.

It was on the April Fast, I know,  
In this city by the sea ;  
And the boat was full, and all hearts cried " Pull "  
To the curvèd shore, where the woodlands wore  
Their spring embroidery !

And the voice of the wind invited to roam,  
While the laugh was as light as the feathery foam  
That blew o'er the chafing Dee ;  
But the Angel of Death swooped down like a breath,  
And struck on a dreadful key ;  
And the harp of joy, like some trustless toy,  
Was tuned to a tragedy.

No war of the wind and the wave so much  
As dash the cup of glee :  
But the ferryman Death took the helm of life,  
And the boat went down in a hush and a strife,  
To the depths of the dreadful Dee—  
Went down with my life, my love, and my bride,  
With a three score more engulfed in the tide,  
In the dread catastrophe !

And all that I saw of my bride and my life,  
Through the wail, and the hush, and the awful  
strife,  
Was a dear little drift of white ;  
And a sweet little hand rose out of the wave,  
As a lily would droop o'er a new-dug grave—  
Then all was as still as the night !

And, my darling thus cut from the rose of my love—  
Now life is but dregs to me :  
But when the stars shine o'er the waters divine,  
And mirror themselves on the Dee,

I see her glad eyes,  
While the foam-bells rise  
In a spell of agony :  
And I see her soft hand outstretched on the sand ;  
And the dear little drift of white  
Is as bright on my view  
As the vision I drew  
In the grief of that awful night,  
When my life and my bride  
Went down by my side  
In that dread catastrophe !

---

## THE VICTIM

(*Of the Ferry-boat Accident. April, 1876.*)

A cold white corpse lies still—  
'Tis a woman's young and fair,  
And the pallid face has a heavenly smile,  
As if she died in prayer :  
The pride of home is so wet with foam,  
But the river would not spare.

The bosom beats no more,  
No vital glow is there,  
And the idle weeds of the sea entwine  
Among her auburn hair ;  
And the soul is fled, but she seems not dead,  
But asleep, unvexed with care.

Why sport ye breezes now ?  
Why play with each dripping tress ?  
'Twas ye that chafed the full flood-tide,  
And the riot slew her grace.  
Break on the shore—your victim 's no more ;  
Let us kiss the marble face.

She is lifeless, cruel breeze ;  
She stirs not on the sand :  
Look how the waves dash so rudely o'er  
Her soft little marble hand ;  
And the faint blue eye has a heavenly dye,  
As it viewless opes on land.

Weep for her, friends on shore ;  
Where do you look for her face ?  
Where are you waiting to fondly entwine  
In one long, last embrace ?  
Take one cold kiss of those colder lips,  
One silent, last caress.

Let us bear her away to the tomb,  
In some soft secluded grot,  
Where the grateful rose and the violets bloom,  
To deck the hallowed spot :  
The birds will sing on their dewy wing,  
And she 'll never be forgot !

---

### A SWEET SURMISE.

---

Sisters in love, I ask your ears,  
While I relate my tale of woe,  
Is it not hard to be in fears  
For what we wish, yet dare not know ?  
Ah, yes ! you 'll echo, I know well,  
For love's sweet chords responsive swell.

I am in love, yet dare not ask  
My own poor heart the reason why ;  
I dare not lift the modest mask,  
And breathe in love my ardent cry ;  
For, to tell truth, as truth is true,  
'Tis from a surmise it all grew.

On slender stems its buds are hung—  
Upon a look—a kiss—a smile,  
Or on the sweet sounds of the tongue,  
Which sometimes all our fears beguile ;  
And then we find how frail is hope  
To hang upon so weak a prop.

He gladly speaks, and thrills my heart,  
But not a word of love he says ;  
He likes my taste and skill in art,  
And gives my voice melodious praise ;  
But, oh ! that is the most, I own,  
On which my surmise all has grown.

I know him just as well can be,  
And oft at eve we walk abroad ;  
At intervals he comes to tea,  
And lingers long in our abode ;  
While, when the parting moment nears,  
I feel my eyes are filled with tears.

His eyes meet mine in radiant smiles—  
Not much in that I freely own ;  
For men have now so many wiles,  
And perfect actors they have grown :  
I fear, and I am much afraid,  
That love is all a masquerade !

Sweet sisters, tell me what to do,  
My heart would speak, yet has no tongue ;  
I love unwisely it is true,  
But, please remember, I am young ;  
Yet though I love in riper years,  
I could not have more hopes and fears.

---

#### SISTERS IN SORROW.

---

Sister in love, and sorrow too,  
I just have read thy plaintive wail,  
And to my ear it strikes so true,  
That thou hast almost told my tale ;

But thou hast hope, while all I own  
Is but the lonely spinster's moan.

I once had love, but I it slew,  
And had its golden threads like thee ;  
I feel that I deserve my due  
For slaying it unwittingly :  
Ah ! little do we value truth  
In the warm hey-day of our youth.

I am not yet so crabbed and old  
As not a love-sick heart advise ;  
So sister dear in thy heart fold  
Thy silent secrets and be wise ;  
For to be true the bubble breaks  
Whene'er thy mother's tongue awakes !

As much as I, my love she killed—  
How foolish fond our mothers grow !  
She said in joke, I was self-willed,  
And flirted with the fashions so ;  
While many things she threw in jokes,  
Which seem not so to other folks.

She said that we were much alike,  
And that our tastes were one accord ;  
That we had tempers that would strike  
Upon one glad harmonious chord :  
And then my love began to wane,  
Until at length it was quite slain.

My hopes are in the yellow leaf;  
They once were in a fragrant bloom ;  
And as I dew them with my grief,  
They sometimes give a faint perfume ;  
So let my case a lesson be  
To all who love unthinkingly.

---

#### A VOICE FROM A LETTER-BOX.

---

One moonless midnight, when the breeze  
Blew ghost-like thro' the drooping trees,  
A parasite in wine  
Was turning homeward full and free,  
His path bright by remembered glee,  
Struck from some social shrine.

While drifting in a dreamy mood,  
Beside a letter-box he stood,  
His wits to gather up ;  
But sliding into sluggish sleep,  
He soon felt o'er him creatures creep,  
The spectres of the cup !

And as he lay upon the grass,  
A tongue did seem to him to pass  
Into the iron vault,

And say, "Oh wretch, that lying note  
Was born upon thy dead-sea thought  
To make true love to halt."

He looked and saw a figure white,  
With thunder-scars of gloom and light,  
And eyes that flashed with ire ;  
Its fingers o'er the harp of hate  
Flew to a kindless key of fate,  
In wild and wingèd fire.

"My voice," it said, "will haunt—beware !  
I will accuse thee everywhere,  
Till thou dost own that lie ;  
Say wilt thou make amends to them,  
And weave again love's diadem,  
And calm the hearts that sigh ? "

"I will," he gasped : the stars went down,  
And gently o'er the sleeping town  
Morn broke in gladsome key ;  
And Nature's music broke night's thrall,  
In undertones of love to all,  
Save parasites as he !

And gazing up, no form was there—  
No voice accused—he echoed where ?  
He snatched at his pelf—  
No thief was there : one hand unknown  
Had struck a vivid undertone  
Upon the string of Self.

### HESPERUS.

---

Beloved star, in lower heaven,  
How chaste thy lucid ray !  
A diamond on the brow of Even,  
A lamp to dying day.

When day's bright eyelids softly fall,  
And darkness drapes the wood,  
Thou art the pioneer of all  
Thy heavenly sisterhood !

Alone, meek beauty in the skies,  
Sweet sentinel of night ;  
Thy ray brings hope to pilgrims' eyes,  
And to the way-worn wight.

Thou art the pensile gem above,  
The violet of the sky,  
The pale propitious star of love,  
The tear in twilight's eye.

Star of my soul ! thou tender light,  
Thou blossom in the gloom !  
A flower that gems the arch of night,  
Like hope beyond the tomb !

Oh, may my final hour of breath  
Be lit, sweet star, by thee,  
To guide me o'er the bourne of death  
To dark eternity !

BIRTH OF A BLOSSOM.

---

I stand among a drift of withered leaves,  
While all below seems dead ;  
Save where the windy loom of winter weaves  
A mask for its own head !

Beneath whose gloom the floral trophies lie,  
Until the dark woods ring ;  
Till from decay and death, life bloometh by  
The alchemy of Spring !

Beneath thy mask, old Winter, still I see  
The fires of nature glow ;  
For here the snowdrop, type of purity,  
Is now baptized in snow.

Its drooping bell, so perfect poised, bows  
Towards its mother Earth ;  
And only asks a cradle 'neath the boughs,  
And snow to hail its birth.

Meek blossom, cradled in the icy air,  
Thou symbol of the true ;  
The high and holy bloometh everywhere,  
When hearts are pure as you !

Who like to thee, by chilling airs are fed  
Into perennial youth ;  
And o'er their lowly pathways meekly shed  
The tears of love and truth.

Fair token of the Beautiful above,  
The Hand that fashioned thee  
Is dipped too deeply in the fount of Love  
Its wrath to ever see !

---

### A VISION.

I had a vision in the swoon of sleep,—  
I saw a mighty temple in decay,  
And Desolation, like a ghastly sprite,  
Walked thro' a flowerless wilderness of weeds ;  
The ivy crept above the haughty pile,  
As if in triumph o'er the spoils of Art ;  
And in the cloisters all was deadly mute,  
Save the lone echoes of some pilgrim's voice—  
That holy peace, that deep sepulchral calm,  
Which Nature muffles o'er the wrecks of Time !  
I looked above, and in the sapphire sky,  
I noted Nature was unchanged by Time ;  
But as my vision grew, I saw the pile  
Rise, like a phoenix, to its pristine strength,  
And Desolation even wore a smile ;—  
The flag of Freedom floated o'er the walls,  
And swords lay rusty in the lap of Peace.  
Then I awoke to find that Error's shrine  
(Where superstition as a priestess reigned)  
Had disappeared before the blaze of Truth ;  
And from its ashes, there arose the True—  
Still mounting upwards like the fabled tree—  
That roots on earth yet branches in the heavens !

### A REQUIEM.

---

Back to the cold unfeeling ground  
We give the silent clay ;  
The spirit 'mid the stars is crowned  
In sinless white array !  
Thy joys were few, thy life was true,  
Peace to thy spirit, peace !

Beside this tree poor pilgrim sleep  
In uninvaded peace :  
At eve, the drooping trees will weep,  
When our sad tears will cease.  
Thy joys were few, thy life was true,  
Peace to thy spirit, peace !

---

### IN BITTER WATERS.

---

I passed along the highway in  
The bitter cold and snow,  
I saw the crowds without, within,  
All surging to and fro.

I heard the light laugh of the feast,  
I heard the wail of woe ;  
I saw the stars glow in the East,  
And shine on all below.

As light hearts passed, a bitter thought  
Began to dew mine eye,  
I thought how sweetless was my lot—  
What wretch so poor as I ?

I laid me on the frozen grass,  
And heard my wild heart beat ;  
I saw a proud patrician pass  
And scorn my shoeless feet.

He passed with one in ruffling silk ;  
I cursed the jugglers all,  
Who drink the honey and the milk,  
And leave us bitter gall.

With burning heart I drifted on,  
Tho' 'neath the iron heel ;  
My star of liberty still shone,  
A slave I would not kneel.

But lo ! there opened to my view  
A scene that softened me,  
To which my pains like foam-bells grew  
Upon a stormful sea.

I saw, borne bleeding down the street,  
Two maimed and broken Jews ;  
And tho' I had no shoes for feet,  
They had no feet for shoes !

At pity's touch some heart springs ooze,  
Some frozen well appears,  
So in my heart the Marah dews  
Distilled in softest tears.

---

#### A BARD'S EPITAPH.

---

Beneath this coverlet of earth,  
On which the flowrets wave,  
Lie ashes of a sterling worth,  
In manhood true and brave !

To him the Fates were harsh and rude,  
They carved him darkest ways ;  
He loved the Beautiful and Good,  
And sung them simple praise.

If pity glistens in your eyè  
At desolation drear,  
Observe if now the turf is dry,  
And moisten with a tear.

O'er thy cold ashes—foe of Wrong,  
And lover of the Right—  
Let tear-drops fall, poor son of Song—  
A long and last good-Knight !

## IN MEMORIAM.

---

DR. SIMPSON.

*Died, 10th September, 1880.*

I.

Oh, let my spirit mourn ; for he is gone,  
Most manly man ! In him I lose a light ;  
And, like a pilgrim in a starless night,  
I sadly feel that I am more alone.  
Oh, let me weep, and let my gratitude  
Absolve the tears that now unbidden flow :  
I owe the dear dead life, and springs of woe  
Are opened in my heart while memories brood.  
Thrice blessèd dead ! twice did he give me breath,  
And twice he warded off the pruning knife ;  
Plucked me triumphant from the grasp of Death,  
And gave me back into the lists of life.  
For such can I be mute ? I 'll muse it forth,  
This simple tribute to departed worth.

II.

Oh, strike sad chord ! for Nature's debt is paid  
Untimely, as a frost invades the Spring ;  
And for the hour the Beautiful seems dead  
Beneath the burden of our suffering.

Oh, sombre hour ! let muffled music thrill ;  
The tender healer passes to the earth ;  
No more he 'll champion life and human ill ;  
    No more his voice will cheer the shaded hearth.  
Life was in love with life, and hope to him  
    Was the sweet keynote of his human heart :  
Untutored he in cold and studied art—  
His art was artless, and his love ne'er dim.  
And all is gone ! Beneath Death's darker wing  
    Life droops, a sweetless, melancholy thing.

## III.

Hard hearts live long, the tender-toned soon die,  
As the bright jewel soon consumes the ore ;  
His music manner and his melting eye  
    Were oft the dearest physic to the sore.  
He is not dead ! he lives in many hearts ;  
The love-lit leaves of Memory entwine,  
With fondest feelings of his gracious parts,  
    Around the green and consecrated shrine.  
Oh, grant, great Healer, solace to the wife,  
The bridal-blossom in her widowhood ;  
And grant the mother in her eve of life,  
    The tender comfort in her solitude,  
That though he 's dead he 'll live in that green spot  
When many living dead are all forgot !

---

G—— M——.

Another link of life and love is broke,  
And one more hour-glass runs its final sands ;  
While in the twilight of untravelled lands  
The lov'd one sinks to silence by the stroke  
Of the great angel Death ; and sinketh down  
In summer seas and spring-tide of his years,  
When higher hope had triumphed over fears,  
And marked his path with unfulfilled renown !  
Leaf of love's tree blown down the vale of life,  
As summer storms deflower the floral groves,  
When frailest flowers are broken in the strife  
From the green altars of their linkèd loves ;  
Yet silence, falling on thy vacant chair,  
Will now embalm the form so worshipped there !

---

J—— M——.

*Died, 26th March, 1881, aged 70 years.*

Oh ! strike the chord of grief !  
For death has gathered a familiar form  
That long so struggled with life's fitful storm,  
And rose above each blast ;  
But, as one buffet breaks the withered leaf,  
He was laid low at last.

Over departed worth  
Let kind regard and reverence afford  
The music of a tributary chord,  
And sound in simple strains  
The grateful echoes of remembrance forth  
O'er all that now remains.

In radiant hours of peace,  
Hope came and slew the dark despairing fears ;  
But in his eye the light of calmer spheres  
Shone with serener beam,  
To tell how soon Life's taper was to cease,  
And o'er its feverish dream.

Death was familiar quite :  
Although a loveless, yet a looked-for guest,  
It came and touched him, and he sank to rest,  
Into immortal peace,  
Whose darkness is the dawning into light—  
The light that cannot cease !

He rose from lowly spheres—  
The fruitage of his toil—to pride of place ;  
But power could not his lowness efface—  
No shade of pride he knew ;  
But shunned the glitter of his proud compeers,  
And to himself was true.

He had his faults like all—  
His weaker parts that would to weakness point—  
But milder memories would those shades anoint

With light and love-lit dew ;  
And o'er those parts would let a fragrance fall,  
To make the shades more few.

No more on world-waves tossed—  
No more the carve of care upon his brow ;  
And though the grave has broken love-links now,  
Heaven registers them all !  
And not a jot of excellence is lost,  
Though kept in earthly thrall.

He had no thirst for fame—  
No hunger for the bubble of renown ;  
But calmly walked the living valley down,  
And left behind to bloom  
The white rose of an honourable name  
Upon his lonely tomb.

His life did fitly close—  
Not in the twilight of a pensive calm,  
Which heals the wounds the world gives with balm,  
Before the death-shafts fall—  
But almost in the noon of work he chose  
To answer Nature's call.

He lives in many hearts ;  
And living there, no monument he needs,  
Or pageantry that Time would mock with weeds ;  
But let him lowly lie ;  
Greatness and glory play but passing parts,  
But goodness cannot die !

---

## In Memoriam.

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### PRINCE LEOPOLD,

*Died, March, 1884.*

---

The curtain, loosened by the hand of God,  
Has fallen softly o'er a royal life :  
All things seem dark in shadow of the rod,  
To Royal Mother and to widowed wife ;  
Yet life to him was held in bated breath :  
A boon held bitter by the neighbouring frown—  
That sadly muffled all its music down—  
And clouded on the countenance of Death ;  
Now, silence strikes upon its loveless key,  
And winds up weary life ; whilst, all unseen,  
A crown of olive, better than royalty—  
Whose sheaves of sorrow are for ever green—  
Falls round his brow, and round the rifled stem,  
To twine, with love, Hope's own immortal gem !

## SONNETS.

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### I.

#### BLAIRGOWRIE.

Blairgowrie ! thou so blessed by Nature's hand,  
And dower'd so richly with pictorial pride ;  
Where breathes romance and beauty side by side  
In suburb scenes magnificently grand !  
Yet while in praise of each majestic scene,  
Must truth but flatter like a syren smile ?  
Let it proclaim with melancholy mien,  
That vice and self-abasement thee defile,  
And eat into thy heart : thou seem'st in sluggard sleep ;  
While o'er thy neck there coils the devils' chain,  
To bind thee unto bondage, shame, and pain —  
That even a stranger's eye for thee could weep.  
Awake ! let Drink now cease its baneful reign,  
And Nature's gifts to thee will not be dower'd in vain.

---

### II.

#### UNDIVIDED.

At Nature's call that undivided pair  
Sank to the silence of their final sleep ;  
They lived and died as one ! why should we weep  
When we see union so unbroken there ?

Nature was ripe and ready for its rest,  
And the bright spirit of the earth had flown,  
While Death itself had all-familiar grown—  
A loveless yet inexorable guest !  
How beautiful they died, like withered flowers,  
Falling with one rude blast from off the tree ;  
There life and death, these two mysterious powers,  
These dear twin sisters of eternity !  
With such lose mystery, and proclaim no flaw,  
When both are loyal to eternal law.

## III.

To those who are so loyal, what is Death ?  
But the soft sickle and the silver knife  
That cuts the love-bands from the sheaves of life,  
And gathers to the vineyard of their faith :  
The golden key unlocking each to each,  
Though blurred by shadows and the darker dews  
That superstition, from remotest reach,  
Winds round the reaper and his pathway strews ;  
And though his face is fretted with a frown  
When blossoms of the spring are in his jaw,  
Yet autumn leaves he moweth softly down,  
Without a wrestle from his steadfast law.  
And, being loyal, all life's bonds are riven,  
While with one blot the balance is made even !

---

## IV.

## WORKS OF WONDER.

Three thousand dupes ! Some leaders of the town  
Have wilfully assumed the cap and bells,  
And have been lured by seeming magic spells  
To play a stave unto a clever clown !  
What is the game ? unfolding of the mind,  
Or fooling Nature under lock and key ?  
She telleth much, but not so falsely free  
As lock the lips and tell what is behind.  
Three thousand dupes ! in gaping wonder see  
The chord electric touched by sympathy ;  
And since upon its surface they all skim,  
One dips a little deeper 'neath the brim,  
To find a network of magnetic laws,  
And sees well where the human loadstone draws.

---

## V.

## WINTER.

The spirit of the winter cometh white,  
To weave the earth a coverlet of snow ;  
While all the buds spring syrens wooed so low,  
Are lying lowly in their early blight.  
The primrose withers in its promise bright,  
And looks a bridal in its weeds of woe !  
Yet hail, old guest ! thou art thyself we know—  
No double-dealer in a mask of light !

And now thy sceptre in thy hand we see  
Outstretched majestic on the icebound bough ;  
Thy coronal is wove to gird thy brow ;  
    Thy palace laid with frostwork tapestry !  
While in the woods thy music through the trees,  
Is deep and hollow from full-throated keys !

## VI.

## THE MOST NOBLE.

Among the guests who come by primrose ways  
To knock at Honour's door, who would be first  
    To gain the regal seal ? Would he whose thirst  
For fame is slaked by blood receive her bays ?  
Or he, whose heart is hoar by drift of days  
    In singing love to those who earthward plod ?  
Or he, who in the vineyard of his wealth,  
Is Heaven's high steward, and who fills by stealth  
    The horns of plenty by the gold of God ?  
Who is most noble, and whose royal wife  
Rings softer music from the lyre of life,  
    And mends the broken daisy downward trod ?  
To both high Honour has its laurels green ;  
Who wins a leaf ? the Thane of Aberdeen !

## VII.

And 'mong the doers of all deeds divine,  
Who would be first to gain the royal seal  
Of Charity at her exalted shrine ?  
    Would she who dedicates to public weal,

While plenty smiles, the superflux of wealth,  
And with a regal hand great gladness strews  
For rich and poor to nourish on the dews ;  
And each and all to be the heirs of health ?  
Heaven gives to those who never give again,  
But all to self they miserably live  
As dead-sea waters on a barren plain ;  
Yet there are souls who only get to give.  
And who is one ? Who bears the royal mark ?  
The sov'reign soul who gifts the "Duthie" Park !

---

## VIII.

## SCHILLER'S LAST WORDS.

The dying lyrist who, in final notes,  
Breathed "calmer," "calmer," from his heaven-strung harp,  
Still strikes a chord to men full clear and sharp—  
A milder keynote to their hurrying thoughts,  
As they, poor pilgrims to the gilded goals,  
Lured by the bright aurora, quicken pace  
To find when victors, they have run their race,  
And over Life the wheel of lucre rolls.  
Poor palmer's peace !—and breathe a calmer pause,  
To look among God's sisterhood of stars—  
Each shines for all—all knit by loving laws.  
Then, why not ye ? Think ye their music jars ?  
Ye are beguiled : there is no jar above,  
But calmest cadence from the lyre of Love !

## IX.

TO J—— D——.

Dear Friend! one note of thanks I strike to thee,  
As a memorial of the perished past,  
When I was rudely on Life's desert cast,  
And thou wert friend and father unto me!  
In dews of love these memories now distill,  
And turning backward thro' the gulf of years—  
Above the salter surf and bitterer tears—  
I see thy goodness like a sea-mark still,  
Fragrant with kindly deeds; and though Time's tiers  
Of joy and sorrow top that love-mark, yet  
Like to a buried bud of mignonette,  
It perfumes all unseen, and oft appears  
Above the strata of all toil and strife—  
That lingering love-mark of my early life!

---

## X.

ON HEARING MR. DOVE PATERSON GIVE A  
PRIVATE RECITAL.

The music of thy soft chameleon voice  
Sweeps, like a summer wind among the trees,  
Over the lyre of Life in all its keys,  
To bid us weep, and bid us now rejoice.

Swordsman in speech ! thou givest fire to thought  
By kindling touches : and mute Poesy  
Is soul and substance when 'tis deftly wrought  
Upon the anvil of high art by thee.  
Deft toucher on the passions, white and black ;  
And what was viewless by thy art is warmed  
To vivid life—what motionless is charmed,  
And tears half-started are beguilèd back  
By that alternate touching of the chords  
That shows the artist with his weapons—words !

---

## XI.

## LOVE.

In a fair casket, dearest, I have found  
These tender trophies of departed hours,  
Though they are withered, still their voices sound  
As sweet as when they lived as dewy flowers :  
These dear "Forget-me-nots" I send to thee,  
I know they'll speak as they have spoke to me,  
With love embalmed : they will awaken thoughts  
Which are the fragrant voices of the past—  
The joy distilled, as sweet remembrance floats,  
With sweet-toned moments, all too bright to last.  
Wilt thou accept these dear "Forget-me-nots ?"  
I know thy heart will grieve to find them dead,  
But in my memory there are tender plots,  
Which, but the Spoiler, has the power to fade !

## XII.

## MARCH.

March, with his pipe, comes blowing shrill and loud,  
And sounding out the starting of the spring  
With all the leafy train, and buds that cling  
Around the skirts of hoary winter's shroud.  
Blow, Bugler, blow, and sweep the palace clean,  
For Spring to enter with her caskets full  
Of fresh won trophies from the Beautiful,  
Which to embroider all her robe of green !  
Blow, Bugler, blow ! and dry the earth of tears,  
And spread a dry bed for the infant seeds,  
That earth may fatten over plenteous years,  
With horns o'erflowing to sustain our needs ;  
But soften key, lest in thy final blow  
Thou hail'st April as the bride of snow !

---

## XIII.

## JANUARY.

Hast thou forgot, thou first-born of the year,  
Thou art the season of unlovely shade ;  
That thou dost flush with radiance wood and glade,  
As if the spirit of the spring drew near ?

Or hast thou, firstling, caught thy spring-like smiles,  
Which thrill so soon the garniture of earth,  
From Orient climes ? Thy sober self beguiles  
The bleak-brown bracken into early birth,  
While thy soft airs are wooing it to bloom !  
Alas ! too soon ! Yet beautiful, bleak guest,  
Dost thou this morn forget thy native gloom,  
And rise triumphal with the rose of rest  
Stuck in thy hand, to sweeten vale and grot,  
And trump abroad that spring has given her starting note !

---

XIV.

JUNE.

Oh, gentle June ! sweet spirit of the year,  
Now gaily sitting in thy sovereign seat,  
Why dost thou die so soon ? While every sweet  
Is showering from thy bounteous lap, a tear  
Is hidden sadly in thy lucid eye !  
Sweet guest, oh stay ! must thou so early die,  
And leave the floral nurslings, all thine own,  
To tyrant Heat ? Thy vivid greenery  
Is freshest only with thyself alone,  
And we dislike thy sisters loving thee !  
Sweet spirit, stay ! Thou art so short asleep,  
That night becomes the glowing guest of morn ;  
And when at eventide we see thee weep,  
Thy twilight tears are on thy bounty borne.

## XV.

## THE CHARTER OF THE CROSS.

Under the sacred charter of the Cross,  
Great hearts are striving to redeem mankind,  
To purify the heart and free the mind,  
And separate the jewels from the dross.  
All honour to the pure refining hearts !  
All speed unto the noble guild of good,  
But might this lone voice plead the unloved's parts,  
And ask for them more social brotherhood :  
The stream to silver at the fountain-head,  
To irrigate the heart, and not destroy :  
So that all hearts, unfettered, may be led  
To take their places at the feast of Joy ;  
And each and all at Nature's high behests,  
May no more wither uninvited guests !



## S O N G S.

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### THE AULD KIRK BELL.

---

The Auld Kirk Bell! the Auld Kirk Bell!  
Sae hamely tae my ears,  
You turn the leaves o' childhood owre,  
An' start forgotten tears.

Tho' far awa' frae you I've stray'd,  
I've felt yer dear auld chimes  
Awake the blythest memories  
O' lang departed times.

Oot o' the fold I lang hae stept,  
You ring nae mair for me;  
But aye yer music striks as saft  
Upo' the same auld key.

The frien's I lo'ed hae turned the stile  
That leads sae far tae a',  
An' noo I see they're sleepin' soun  
Aside the mossy wa'!

My schulemates aifter these lang years,  
I dinna ken ava;  
But naething strange the dear auld bell  
Jist rings tae ane an' a'!

The Auld Kirk Bell! the Auld Kirk Bell!  
Hoo mony memories cling  
Aroun' yer wee bit steeple, an'  
Yer dear familiar ring!

---

### MY DEARIE O' THE DEN.

---

Wha disna ken that bonnie den  
In hearin' o' the toun,  
Whaur a' its sweets are Nature's ain,  
An' blythe the birdies croon ;  
An' whan ye gang a bittie ben,  
A burnie gurgles doon !

Aboon the den the burnie rins  
Sae saft, sae sma', an' wee ;  
But dookin' in aneth the whins,  
It prattles on wi' glee,  
But whan it loups the rocky linns,  
It striks a safter key.

Aft hae I ta'en my dearie here,  
When gloamin's star was seen,  
An' spak' laigh love intil her ear  
Upo' the trystin' stane ;  
An' here I ca'd her my ain dear,  
My canty, couthie Jean.

"My lad, I think ye tell a lee,"  
    My love wid archly say,  
"There 's fauseness in yer roguish e'e,  
    Licht as the burnie's spray."  
"I ken, my love; but by yon lea,  
    Hoo siller saft its lay!"

"Aneth the linn the burnie's croon  
    Is unco saft and clear,  
A wee bit stanie turns its tune,  
    Be you my stanie, dear!  
Nae mair I 'll be the royet loon,  
    But be a man I 'll swear.

"Turn ye the music o' my life,  
    Jist like the burnie noo,  
When it forgets its bickering strife,  
    An' rins sae leal and true!  
If ye will be my cantie wife,  
    I'll seal it on yer moo."

Noo baith oor herts are saftly set  
    Tae Love's ain key I ken;  
An' while life rins, we ne'er forget  
    The burnie in the glen;  
An' aye I 'll bless the oor I met  
    My dearie o' the den!

---

## OOR AIN HEARTHSTANE.

Amang Life's joys there's nane sae sweet,  
Whan oor day's wark is dane,  
Than see oor bairnies todlin' first  
Aroun' oor ain hearthstane.  
Tho' some hae a', there's nane sae braw  
As he wha is content—  
A wifie's smile tae care beguile,  
An' naething tae repent.

Oot in the warl the face is fause,  
An' fauser is the hert ;  
A man's nae safe tae be himsel',  
But only play his pairt :  
But roun' oor ain hearthstane we ken  
We dearly lo'e the oor,  
Whan we can tear the mask we wear,  
An' be the leal an' truer.

Amang the silk and jewelled thrang,  
There is nae hert ava,  
An' a their diamonds are but stanes,  
Though they them jewels ca' ;  
But we hae gems in a' oor hames,  
Aye leal, aye true, and braw,  
An' some great ane wid gi' her een  
Tae hae them in her ha'.

An' whan we totter doon the vale,  
    Ae joy is best o' a',  
Tae see oor fireside floo'ries grow,  
    An' see them sweetly blaw.  
An' whan is seen the lang milestane,  
    An life nae mair is green,  
We'll leave its joys like weel-played toys  
    Aroun' oor ain hearthstane !

---

### FORGOTTEN.

---

When other voices charm mine ears,  
    And sing so soft to me,  
Why are mine eyes so dim with tears ?  
Is it because my spirit fears  
    He is forgetting me ?

At dewy eve, when Nature sleeps,  
    Sweet emblems then I see ;  
For love upon the night-wind creeps,  
And in the dews it softly weeps,  
    But never comes to me !

Deep in my heart the secret lies—  
    I dare not give it breath ;  
For ah ! I see when love doth rise,  
It sometimes like an echo dies  
    Away to bitter death !

The future, which I painted fair,  
With all the shapes of joy,  
Is filled with shadows of despair ;  
The roses turn to viewless air,  
The gold to dark alloy !

If all its voice must be a sigh,  
I'll clasp Hope's lonely leaf,  
And let the blighted blossom die,  
To fold its loveless leaves, that I  
May be the bride of grief !

---

#### A LAST ADIEU.

---

The golden hours on wings have flown,  
And melted like the morning dew ;  
Sweet hours are, oh ! so swiftly gone,  
Too soon to say a last adieu !

Time bids me speed : it wrings my soul  
To part with one so dear as you.  
Adieu ! before the sad tears roll,  
My only love ! a last adieu !

The pale moon skims the rippling sea,  
The anchor weighs—the tide is true ;  
And, with the heaving billows, we  
Breathe out this long—this last adieu !

My heart is wholly buried here,  
And, though I'm false, I will be true,  
Yet bury all my hope and fear  
In these wild words—a last adieu !

One kiss—one more—and then my heart  
And thine, that like two blossoms grew,  
Must sever, and for ever part,  
When we have breathed this last adieu !

---

#### IMITATION.

---

Sheathe, oh ! sheathe those violet orbs,  
Which beneath thy brows are hung,  
For their beams my soul absorbs,  
And entralls my halting tongue.  
April's buds are not so chaste  
As those lips I long to taste !

Close, oh ! close that balmy mouth,  
Which exhales the softest dew,  
Soft as zephyrs from the South,  
When they vernal incense strew.  
By the power in that bright eye,  
Bid me live or bid me die !

**BESSIE O' BLAIR.**

Young Bessie was lo'ed by a swack kwintra chiel,  
A broth o' a birkie, fast gaun to tae the de'il ;  
At a' the balls roun' he was votit the beau,  
And Bessie was jealous he had sae muckle "go."

An auld carle, Sandy, a rival was he,  
But he hadnna the spunk tae be ony free ;  
Sae at the last Yule time the callan got fou',  
An' ca'd oot some teeth frae the auld carle's mou'.

For sicna a job he cam' on the toun,  
And ceevily was askit by oor ain Shirra Broon  
To leave a guid poun' for behoof o' the Croon ;  
An' the news o' the gift went far roun' an' roun'.

Far aroun' it wis kent that Sandy had brass,  
An' a'body spak whan they saw him wi' a lass,  
As he took bonnie Bessie ae nicht tae a dance,  
Whan the callan wis doun i' the beuks for a chance.

Tho' Bessie had naething tae tocher her hert,  
She likit the birkie, an' aye took his pairt ;  
An' tae him she fain wad appear tae be true,  
Tho' she likit the auld carle's brass an' his coo !

So gettin' young Bessie intil a bit neuk,  
The douce carle spak mair than wis doun i' the beuk :  
"Guid gracious! noo, Sandy, hoo didna you speak seener?—  
I jist gaed my word tae that young drucken winner."

" But, Bessie, I lo'e ye, an' try if ye can  
Tae mak' me yer mate—nae that slipe o' a man."  
" Weel, Sandy, jist leave ye the business tae me,  
An', fegs, I'se dee a' I ever can dee ! "

Hooever 'twas ended or mended or done,  
There sune wis a marriage, an' lots o' guid fun ;  
But, fegs, the auld carle got doited wi' drink,  
An' blethered a bit owre the callan's bit blink.

Then the callan pu'ed mair o' his teeth without fee,  
An' managed to blacken weel the auld carle's e'e ;  
Yet bonnie young Bessie is his wife i' the noo,  
An' fegs, she says, truly she's sma' cause tae rue !

---

#### BONNIE DON.

---

The bonnie Don an' siller Dee  
Flow frae the herts o' hielan hills,  
An' baith far doun are unco wee,  
Until they drink the sparklin' rills.

I lo'e the Don the best I trow,  
Tho' they are twins and brithers twa,  
Baith like tae play and lichtly row,  
Bit ane I ken likes play for a !



Fu' mony a' wheel the Don spins roun',  
Whan it is chafin tae be free,  
An' then it saftly wimples doon  
By heathy bank and flowery lea.

Wi' mony a crook 'mong banks an' braes,  
An' mony an' arch o' twining trees,  
It rins whaur I spent childhood's days,  
Whan a' its youthfu' pictures please !

An' by whaur noo the boatie rows,  
An' whaur I aft hae wooed sae sweet,  
Wi' birdies chirpin' on the boughs,  
An' wedded waters at oor feet.

Far doon its waters saftly lave  
The spot that shrines my dearie, Jean,  
An' there it whispers at her grave,  
On a' the joys that might hae been !

---

#### SONG OF SILENCE.

---

Soul of silence ! gently hover,  
Breathe from heaven thy blessed balm ;  
Let all strife and toil be over,  
Usher in the hour of calm.

Human hearts are tir'd of jarring—  
Longing for the dawn of rest ;  
Man with man now weary warring,  
Waits for thee, ethereal guest !

When the star of eve is peeping  
From its chamber in the sky ;  
When the wind-rock'd flowers are sleeping,  
Then we feel thy spirit nigh.  
In thy spell love breaks its fetter,  
Soothing soft hearts blend to bliss ;  
In the round of joy, no better  
Yet exceeds the sum of this !

When the tear of love is starting,  
And soft ties are cut in twain,  
Thou can'st ease the pang of parting,  
And can'st soothe when words give pain.  
O'er the shaded hearth thou stealest ;  
Sadly fill'st the vacant chair ;  
Yet the heart thou gently healest,  
And embalm'st the sorrow there.

And when spiteful words are spoken  
To the patient, upright heart ;  
E'en when Love's last stay is broken,  
Silence ! thou canst ease the dart.  
Silence ! thou art sweet in season—  
Sentinel of eye and heart—  
Ripened by the sun of reason,  
What a gracious gem thou art !

---

When the lamp of life burns lowly  
Through the watches of the night,  
Thou dost trim it soft and slowly,  
With a beam of morning light.  
When its light is falt'ring faintly,  
Like a starbeam through the gloom,  
Hush all strife ; supreme and saintly,  
Write thy name upon our tomb.



## Finale.

The white-winged moments of a nameless joy  
Passed with the airy beings of the mind,  
Are melting slowly, as each tender toy  
Draws back the veil and takes one look behind!  
And looking backward thro' the dreamy spell  
Of thoughtful years—amid their light and shade—  
I see one fancy-child arise and fade,  
And fading from my thoughts I bid farewell!  
And as the lights upon the mimic stage  
Are softly sinking, I misgive and doubt,  
That Hope, the syren, has but lit my page  
To blow the taper all the swifter out!  
Yet one thought clings; none robs the brain-born  
bliss  
Passed with the figures which I now dismiss!







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